Redbook

25 Cents

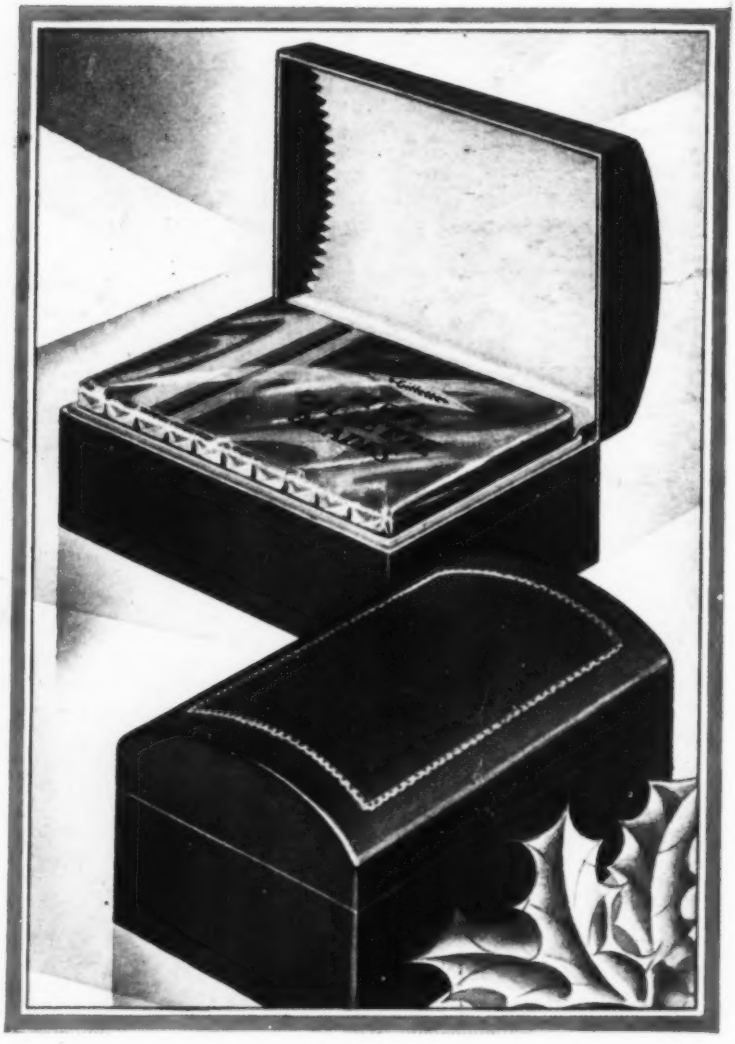
December 1929

LOST LOVE SONG
by Emma-Lindsay Squier

Show-Down
by Nina Wilcox Putnam

Heart of the North
by William Byron Mowery

How to be *Generous*— to a man at Christmas



JUST how does the Gillette Fifty Box qualify as the ideal Christmas gift for a man? Here's how—on these eight counts:

It is practical . . . Man, famous for his practical mind, insists on useful gifts.

Yet he probably wouldn't buy this for himself . . . From long habit, he is used to getting his blades in packs of five and ten. This will be a new and refreshing idea for him.

He'll be sure to use it . . . Blades are a daily necessity in every man's life. The Gillette Fifty Box is the most convenient way to have them.

It is personal . . . It's all to himself, for his own intimate, bathroom use.

It is good looking . . . Packed, as you see, in a metal box, velvet lined, with a spring-hinge cover. Blades are enclosed in brilliant Cellophane.

It is truly generous . . . With fifty smooth, double-edged Gillette Blades in easy grasp, a man can look forward to more continuous shaving comfort than he has probably ever enjoyed before in his life.

It will last well beyond the Christmas season . . . For months his mornings will be free from all thought of buying Gillette Blades.

It is reasonable in price . . . Five dollars buys this *ideal* gift. On sale everywhere.

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Gillette

Five Dollars

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Does your tooth brush ever *"show pink"?*

Neglected GUMS *are a needless threat to your teeth*

EVEN an occasional tinge of "pink" upon your tooth brush should be taken seriously and corrected promptly.

For that little weak spot on the walls of your gums cannot be permitted to bleed—unheeded! It might be the forerunner of trouble far more serious.

As your dentist will tell you, unhealthy gums are responsible for the loss of thousands of good teeth. The host of gum disorders nearly always start with a slight bleeding—gingivitis, Vincent's disease, occasionally even the dreaded pyorrhea may follow!

Don't wait for gum troubles, prevent them

Ideas of oral hygiene and dental care have changed radically during the past few years! And it's common sense to use a tooth paste that guards your gums while it cleans your teeth.

Thousands of dentists personally recommend Ipana. For Ipana keeps your teeth immaculate. It tones your gums at the same time—sends the fresh blood coursing through them, to purify and strengthen the millions of cells!

Gum troubles attack when you least expect them. They are caused by creamy sauces; luscious, tempting salads—by the soft foods you eat and prefer. The modern diet gives the gums too little exercise to keep them firm and sound!

But Ipana is scientifically compounded to prevent damage. It stimulates the gum tissue, speeds circulation through the tiny veins. It contains Ziratol, a hemostatic and antiseptic used by dentists in treating the gums.

So get Ipana and play safe. Its double protection makes it a wise economy, even though you pay a few cents more for it—with gum troubles the danger they are—with gum neglect the risk that dentists tell you it is!

Send the coupon for a 10 day sample of Ipana if you wish but, better still, get a large size tube from your druggist. Tonight, begin the full month's test! Within 30 days your teeth will be cleaner—whiter; and your gums firmer—harder—sounder.

★ ★ ★ ★

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IPANA Tooth Paste

Want *her* to grow up to be *beautiful?*

Want *him* to be *really* successful?

Then, *mother,* teach them *early* the importance of cleanliness

We know, mother, the kind of older children you want yours to be.

Not pretty or handsome only . . . nor healthy, merely . . . not even just accomplished. You're hoping for *character* . . . a certain *graciousness.*

The boy, in other words, to be normal, spirited, vigorous . . . but a gentleman. And her to have that surest and loveliest foundation for feminine charm, refinement.

Precious qualities indeed, mother, but impossible without cleanliness. That is why we say, insist *from an early age* on the highest standards.

What daily baths accomplish

Baby gets his bath, every day without fail. Why shouldn't brother and sister, who stray farther and play harder?

Time and trouble is no excuse. Modern mothers are teaching their children, surprisingly soon, to bathe themselves.

Nor need they be induced with games and water toys. There is that *rightness* about thorough daily body washing that even the youngster can be made to feel; to come to love and glory in; to turn to eagerly for wide-awakeness, mind release, and sheer physical content.

Don't make this common mistake

Some mothers continue year after year, to assume the entire cleanliness responsibility for their children.

What a mistake! How can the joy of cleanliness become self-assertive and genuine, when left so largely to a prompter?

And it's a very real force in life, this inner attitude of ours toward cleanliness. Do we not know, or can't we pick out among our acquaintances, those who think most of cleanliness? And wouldn't such a list include our most loved friends? . . . the healthiest, happiest and best respected ones?

More about* HER *beauty,* HIS *success

You do want your little girl to be beautiful. Consequently you won't fail to teach her the relationship between pores cleansed daily with soap and water, and a clear complexion; between nice hair and hair kept clean; between lovely hands and the use of a handbrush; between clothes fresh-laundered and an attractiveness obtainable in no other way.

And the same way with your little boy, the more he comes to esteem soap and water the more others will come to esteem him.

Checking up on the whole family

Occasionally, the whole family needs checking up with respect to cleanliness.

Are you, mother, and you, father, careful enough about your own appearance? Is the size of the family wash each week permitted to be "generous"? Does everyone have his individual towel and wash cloth? Are curtains kept gay, and woodwork bright?

Is the whole household every bit as happy as it could be . . . with just a little more thought given to cleanliness each day?

Published by the Association of American Soap and Glycerine Producers, Inc., to aid the work of CLEANLINESS INSTITUTE, *45 East 17th Street, New York.*

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MARGARET CULKIN BANNING

Young people today fall as desperately in love with each other as ever before. But there is something in the air which says to them: "You must not make an old-fashioned marriage; you must at least try to do something different." Mrs. Banning tells the utterly fascinating love story of such a couple—the man's side of modern marriage as seen by a woman. It begins in the next, the January, issue, under the title:

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THE McCALL COMPANY, PUBLISHER, THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

JOHN C. STERLING, *Vice-President* — WILLIAM B. WARNER, *President and Treasurer* — FRANCIS HUTTER, *Secretary*

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Extending the limits of Man's Opportunity

Only a few generations ago the life of man was circumscribed by his own physical limitations . . . the dexterity of his fingers, the strength of his back, the speed of his limbs, and the labor of domestic animals. . . . The interchange of commodities was slow, difficult. There were no good roads, as we know them today, nor any way to travel swiftly, surely, over these roads. The deeply rutted wagon trail was a long, hard trail. . . . Though boundless acres were all about, it was only the adventurous few who traveled far. Many a man lived and died without ever having been more than fifty miles from home. . . . Then was born an idea that was destined to reshape the frontiers and the future of the entire country—the idea of making a small, strong, simple automobile so low in price that it might be placed within the means of all the people.

The coming of this new means of transportation not only changed the industrial life of the nation, but helped to change the private lives of every one for all the generations to come.

It leveled hills, extended horizons, created new opportunities, furnished the means to earn more money and to enjoy the leisure which that increased income should bring.

In creating and building a small, strong, simple automobile at a low price, and in using it, man became accustomed to thinking of machinery as a servant. He made power work for him.

More and more as time went on, in industrial plants and on the farm, heavy labor was taken off the back of man and placed upon the broader shoulders of the machine.

The Ford moved everywhere, blazing the way over miry roads and rocky mountain trails, through gumbo and sand, creating a rising demand for swifter, smoother travel that resulted in the construction of hundreds of thousands of miles of cement and macadam highways reaching to all parts of the country.

The benefits resulting from the introduction of the low-priced automobile have done more than perhaps any other single thing to increase the standards of living and to make this a truly united country.

All the people are blended together by the flexibility and swiftness of automobile transportation. The prairie farmer, the industrial worker, and the city business man are governed by similar impulses, similar tastes, similar demands upon highly specialized machinery to serve them.

This civilization can show no greater example of disciplined machinery than in the operation of the Ford Industries.

The great miracle is not the car, but the machines that make the machine—the methods that make it possible to build such a fine car, in large numbers, at a low price.

Craftsmanship has been put into mass production. Millions and millions of parts are made—each one so accurate and so exactly like the other that they fit perfectly to the thousandth of an inch when brought together for assembly into complete units.

Men by the thousands and the hundred thousand are employed at the Rouge plant alone and there are hundreds of acres of plant equipment. Yet the purpose today is wholly the same as when the equipment of the Ford organization was housed in a single small building.

Everything that has been done has been done to give further scope and expression to the Ford Idea.

That idea is not merely to make automobiles—not merely to create so much additional machinery and so many millions of additional horsepower—but to make this a better world in which to live through providing economical transportation for all the people.

For that purpose the first Model T was made twenty-one years ago. For that purpose the new Ford is made today. In 1929, as in 1908, it is again helping to reshape the frontiers and the future of the country and to further extend the limits of man's opportunity.

Ford

Ford Motor Company
Detroit, Michigan

Six Steps to Success

JOHN M. BREWER

Associate Professor of Education and Director of the Bureau of Vocational Guidance, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University

WITH the beginning of the new school or college year students should see clearly ahead of them the succeeding steps in their educational and vocational careers. Consideration of these steps should not be postponed until graduation.

This does not mean that the studies selected in school or college should point specifically toward the student's later vocational career. It is of great importance to keep education broad and general as long as possible and not to narrow it too soon toward the vocational.

In the matter of one's vocational career there are several important steps, each of which must be taken satisfactorily to attain success. Each of the following questions represents an important step toward success in vocational life. Consider them and determine which is at present the most important for your own planning.

1. Have you discovered your abilities and interests? If not, you should secure sampling experiences resembling occupational tasks, and find out by this means in what direction your interests and abilities lie.

2. Do you know something about the "geography" of occupational life—that is, its lines of travel, its populated regions, its requirements, opportunities, and characteristics? If not, you should study good books on occupational opportunities and problems and make yourself familiar with the world through which you are going to travel.

3. Have you chosen your occupation, either tentatively or finally? If not, you should ask yourself whether the first two steps are being taken so that a choice may be easily and wisely made. You should also determine how long it is safe to postpone choice. Thus you will be ready for this step in due season.

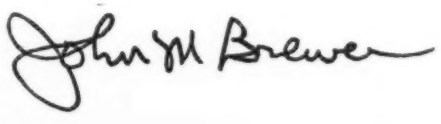
4. Having chosen the occupation and having pursued a "liberal" or broad education as long as seems desirable, have you selected a method of preparing yourself for your chosen calling? If not, you should study the opportunities for such preparation so that you may save time enough in your educational career for such training.

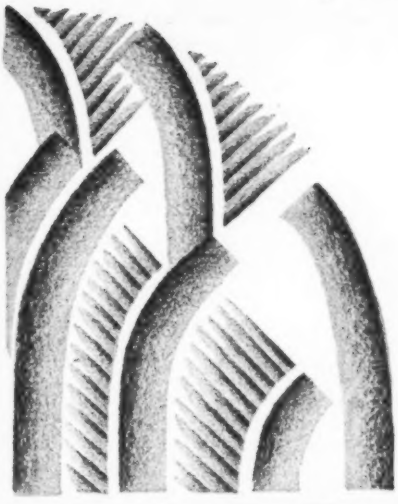
5. Do you know how to get a position after you have selected your calling and have been prepared for it? Can you interview an employer? Do you know the agencies by which you can be brought into contact with opportunities for work? If not, you should set about acquiring all the information, experience, tact, and resourcefulness necessary to this step.

6. Have you acquired or are you gradually acquiring the necessary background of experience and information to make the adjustments which are required in occupational life, to win promotion, make necessary changes, secure new information, and, in general, to insure for yourself a satisfactory standard of occupational service and compensation?

As you take these steps your greatest need is to acquire wisdom. A recent investigation of causes of discharge shows that men fail to satisfy employers in such human matters as tact, coöperation, patience, far more frequently than they fail in skill or technical knowledge in relation to their work.

Though your present task may well be to succeed as a student, such success will bear good fruit in later life only as the succeeding steps are equally well taken.





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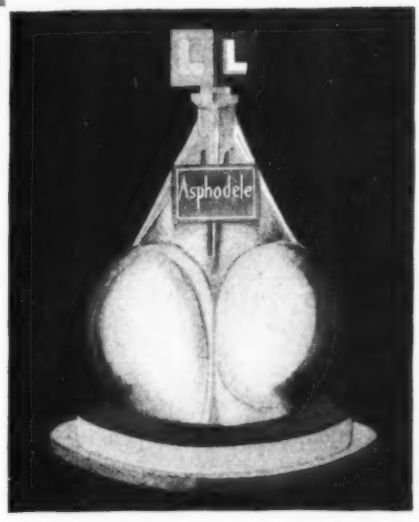

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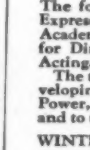
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The Director of the Redbook's Department of Education is a Vassar graduate. With her are associated a group of college women. During the past eight years, we have been privileged to develop the most complete private school information service ever maintained by a magazine. We have visited, not once but many times, over 800 private boarding schools of all kinds for boys and for girls in New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Middle West, Far West and the South.

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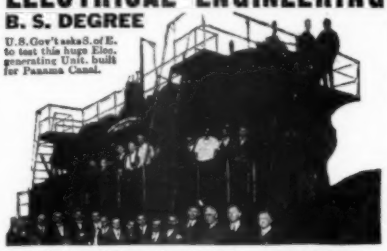

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meaning your wife, SIR ADAM, with the silver gift you give her

Being one of Eve's daughters her feelings and instincts are just as feminine as the curl of her hair or the curve of her mouth.

So it's simply feminine and natural that she should adore nice things. Pretty clothes, so that she looks nice to herself . . . and to you. A table that smiles and sparkles with radiant silverware . . . for her . . . and for you, too.

And being one of Adam's sons you'll strive to please her. Especially at such a mellow season as Christmas. Perhaps she's been struggling along resignedly, using a lot of old and ill-assorted silverware for 1,000 meals a year! No woman's pride was ever made for that. But Christmas, and silver gifts, were made just to change the situation.

Let your dealer show you the silverware to make your wife a happy Christmas "Eve" on Christmas day . . . and for long, long years to come, for 1847 ROGERS BROS. Silverplate is guaranteed without time-limit. And you needn't be a Wall Street magnate to buy her 1847 ROGERS BROS. . . . even though it's the finest of all silverplate. For it's really inexpensive . . . as the prices quoted, for your convenience, on this page will prove.

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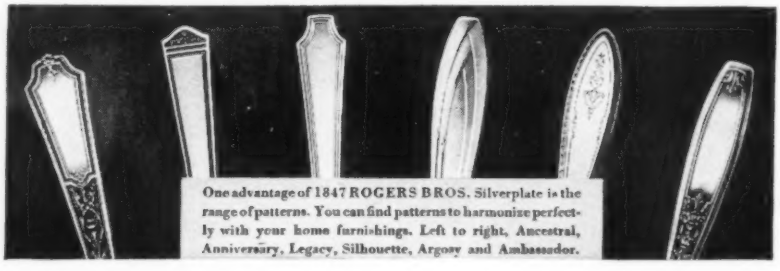

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TUNE IN

By ANGELO PATRI

Decoration by Franklin Booth

THE world is a truly bright and cheerful place, once you get close enough to its life to understand it . . . A dear old lady who for the first time heard the music come riding through the air over the radio, listened with rapt and shining face, then drew a long sigh and murmured: "To think of it! All that lovely music lying about in the air and we not knowing enough to tune in and catch it! I wonder how much of beauty we are losing?"

It is wrong that we should be strangers in our own house, strangers to each other, strangers to the beauty of people, of hills and sky and sea; that we should, in our ignorance and fear, shut out the harmonies that dwell in work and play, in everyday living.

A great artist lived close neighbor to you many years, but because you were shy, you lost him. His song passed unheeded. High on a hill behind your barn the arbutus blooms under wreaths of melting snow, a fairy vision every spring-time, but you have never gone there to greet it. Its harmonies passed you by. A gay little lad waves his hand to you as you pass his gate every morning. He shouts a gay salute. He coaxes you to stop and play, but you have never found the courage to open the gate that separates you from him. You have lost his song—and the songs of childhood are such precious songs.

It is indeed sad that with all this color and sound about you, all the merry children and brave men and high-hearted women, all the nobility of life and living, that you have never attuned your spirit to catch the music. You have chosen to remain apart, a stranger to much that renders the world lovely and livable.

The message of good will, good health, good days fairly aches to be delivered into your ears. Take heart and grace and strength and come out to play boldly. Know that the chill of dread that robbed your lips of their smile and your eyes of the light of joy, the clutch that well-nigh strangled your spirit and securely fettered your tongue, is your neighbor's old familiar fear.

Every singer, story-teller, gardener, tramp, whoever it be who halts before your door to share his precious bit of beauty, has trodden upon his own doubt and timidity. He mounted his fears that he might, for an instant, enjoy the warmth of your genial appreciation and understanding. Welcome him. Tune in.

Life is ever a mystery. He who would master its first secret must listen to the heart-beat of the world and know its sorrow and its joy for his own.

It's your Move and you can't lose if you give or get an Elgin for Christmas

Christmas came long before watches, but ever since the two have been on earth together . . . they've been together inseparably, it seems . . . For somehow a watch is the perfect way of saying to those you love, all the things that bubble up inside you when the mellow Christmas season comes along. Perhaps it's because a watch carries your present sentiments long into the future, saying with every beat "may every hour I record be happy as this Christmas day of my presentation." . . . And this is the best Christmas in sixty years for choosing an Elgin. More styles. More new shapes and sizes. Prices in a closely ascending scale, from $15.00 to $650. New combinations of metals and enamel. New settings of precious gems. A new Elgin watch family, the largest in the world, but still backed by the old Elgin tradition of fine timekeeping, accurate, faithful service and an unconditional guarantee.

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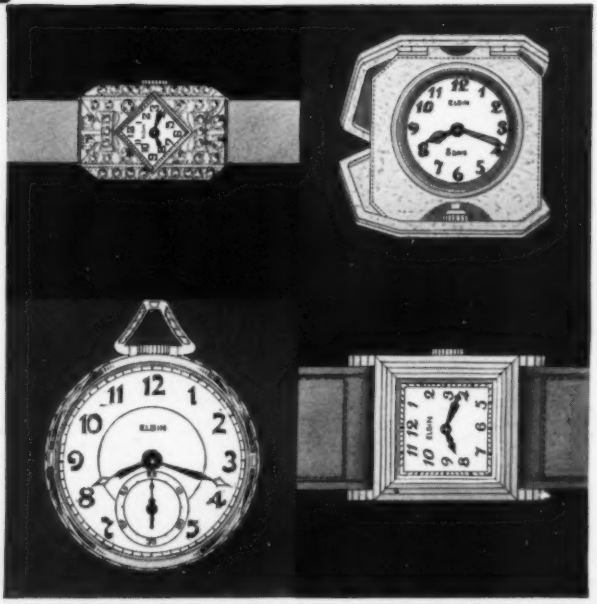

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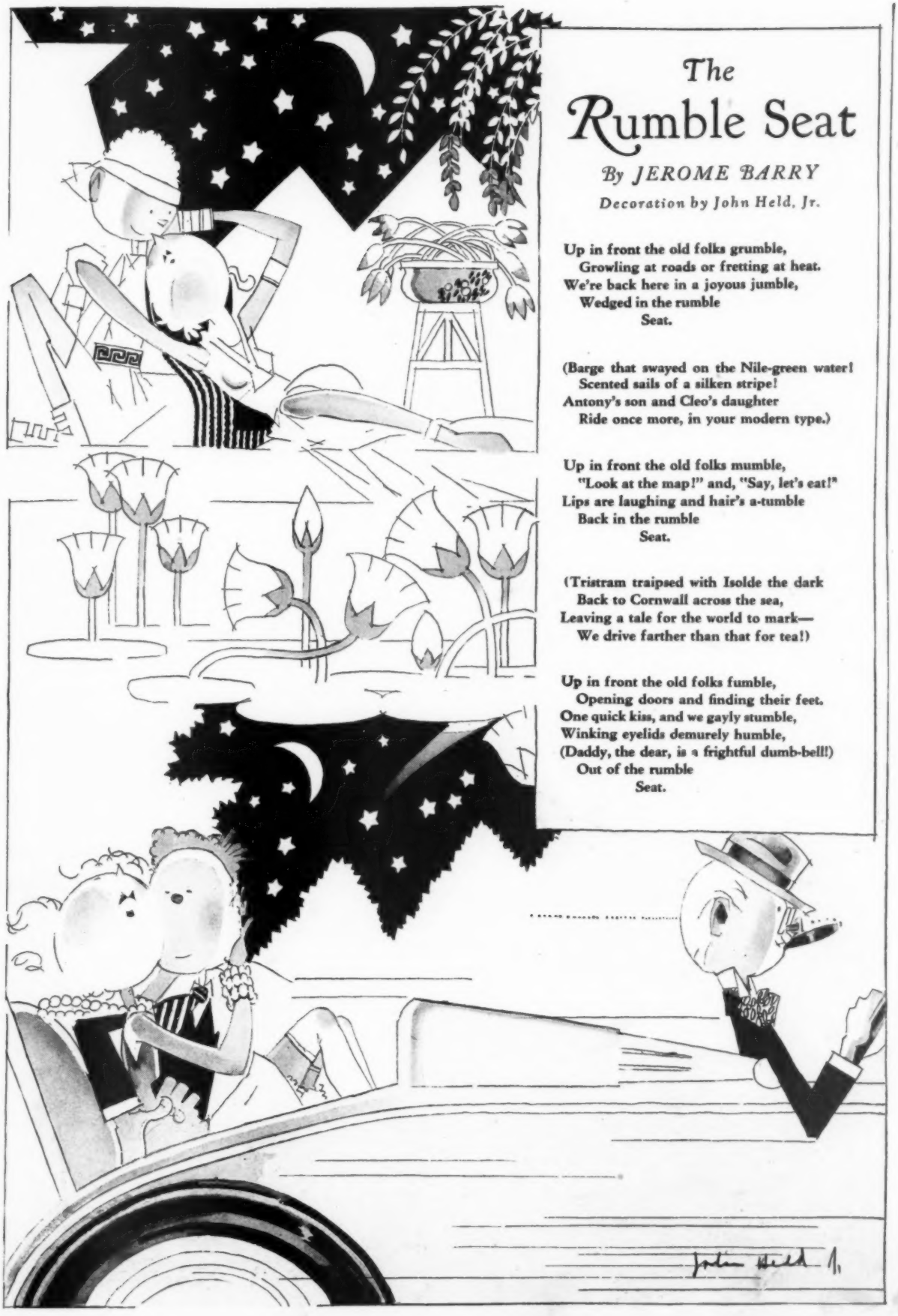


The Rumble Seat

By JEROME BARRY

Decoration by John Held, Jr.

Up in front the old folks grumble,
Growling at roads or fretting at heat.
We're back here in a joyous jumble,
Wedged in the rumble
Seat.

(Barge that swayed on the Nile-green water!
Scented sails of a silken stripe!
Antony's son and Cleo's daughter
Ride once more, in your modern type.)

Up in front the old folks mumble,
"Look at the map!" and, "Say, let's eat!"
Lips are laughing and hair's a-tumble
Back in the rumble
Seat.

(Tristram traipsed with Isolde the dark
Back to Cornwall across the sea,
Leaving a tale for the world to mark—
We drive farther than that for tea!)

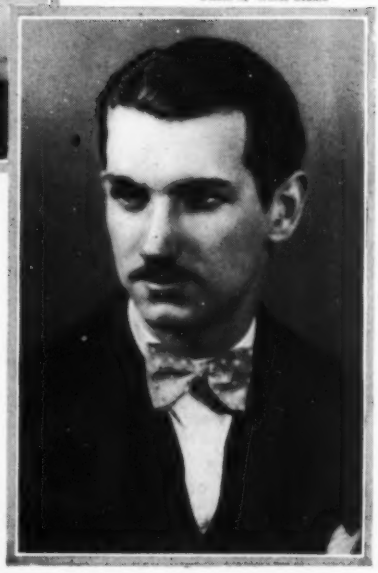
Up in front the old folks fumble,
Opening doors and finding their feet.
One quick kiss, and we gayly stumble,
Winking eyelids demurely humble,
(Daddy, the dear, is a frightful dumb-bell!)
Out of the rumble
Seat.

Photo by De Barron

CAMELIA CAMPBELL

Four years ago Miss Campbell headed the cast of a Shakespearean company which played under the auspices of the Board of Education of New York. Last year she played in Mae West's "Pleasure Man." Well, it's all in the day's work, no doubt. But she is very firm in declaring that the sweet *Juliet* and the independent *Katherine* of the Elizabethan William are her favorite parts. She is a busy lady and finds not much time for her favorite diversions—riding, and all sorts of outdoor sports. As for dancing, she would rather do that than eat or act or pose. And just to prove that her faults are not limited, while she is posing for Mr. Stein as a gorgeous society girl, she thinks long thoughts to herself and puts them down in poetry after working hours.

Photo by White Studio



HARVÉ STEIN: Always interested in theatrical types of illustration, Mr. Stein decided the best way to get the right atmosphere would be to get behind the scenes and do the actual work. He joined the Pavley-Oukrainsky Ballet in Chicago, and went with them on a tour to Europe. The ballet promptly disbanded when it got there, and so Mr. Stein just remained and studied art in Paris instead. After a year he came back, landed in New York, liked it and stayed. He specializes in social illustration, such as night-club life, evening clothes and such dressy things. Mr. Stein is a native Chicagoan and received his early art education at the Chicago Art Institute.

Photo by
Alfred Cheney Johnston

KATHERINE BURKE

It's a funny thing, this world: here is Katherine Burke, who announces that her favorite pastime is walking. She walks to the theater every day (which theater? Look at her, and dun't esk—Ziegfeld, naturally) and home again if the weather isn't altogether too bullish and bearish. She is a genuine Manhattan-born-ite, who went into the business world as a mannequin in an exclusive New York shop, but very shortly deserted it for the Ziegfeld organization. Just now she is *Lady Godiva* and walks her famous white horse into the stage cañon every day and sees that he walks (not runs) to the cañon exit when the scene is over. And while the horse is resting, she walks to Mr. Mitchell's studio and poses.

GLEN MITCHELL: The strawberries were ripe and red along the banks of Mr. Paul Dresser's well-known Wabash River when Glen Mitchell was born. He left its banks for the banks of the Boul' Mich. in Chicago, but almost immediately war broke out, and he enlisted in the air service. The armistice was signed before he reached France, but he decided not to disappoint himself too much, and went abroad anyhow. After a long painting trip through foreign lands, a studio in Florence and one in Paris, he has come to New York again. He has exhibited work in New York and Chicago; but he finds time to illustrate magazines too, and in this he has the very able assistance of Miss Burke.

GEORGIANA CUSACHS

She considers swimming and diving the ideal recreation. So she dived right out of Annapolis and a probable future as the bride of some starched ensign, and out of a sub-deb career in Baltimore, and swimming bravely, came up for air in New York Harbor. She has gone back to Annapolis to swim and dive and win contests there, but most of the time she has kept her big brown eyes and her lovely brown hair right here in New York. And so long as the fashion artists give her time enough off for swimming and diving, she will keep on working for them.

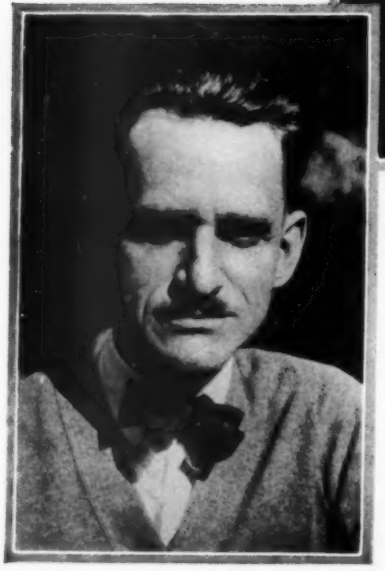
Photo by Edward Thayer Monroe

HELEN DRYDEN: Helen Dryden believes in revolutions. She was a sub-deb in Baltimore taking an art course at the Academy when she caused her first one. She wanted to Do Something. So she came to New York and spent a cold hard winter in a little attic room. And along with the snow that drifted in the window, there came a lot of ideas. Then came her second revolution: she wanted to make magazine covers colorful, different and decorative. She put it over and made a good income out of it. Her third revolution was in women's fashions, and she had a lot to do with making women's dress what it is today. Since then stage costuming, illustrated advertising, modernistic pianos and textile design have all engaged her attention.

Photo by
De Barron

MARY ROBINSON

She was born in New York; but her favorite diversion, when she isn't pointing her toes in some musical comedy, is pointing her rifle at some target. She declares she loves rifle-shooting more than any other sport, and is acclaimed as a crack shot. Last season she danced in "Café de Danse" and was in "The Big Fight" with Jack Dempsey. Also she toured the country for three seasons with Irene Bordoni. The stage keeps her busy, but she finds time for some excellent posing, as Mr. Wainwright's pictures show. Miss Robinson is a real stage child, and if all property babies grew up to look like this one, what a world it would be!



S. H. WAINWRIGHT, JR.: Considering Mr. Wainwright's birth and upbringing, he ought to be drawing only slant-eyed daughters of the Orient instead of Occidental beauties like Miss Robinson. For he was brought into this giddy world in Kobe, Japan, where his father and mother were missionaries. When he was six years old, he began studying art under Japanese masters. Later in life he came back here to study art in New York. Then, after a thrilling war period in the Navy, he settled down to draw and to sell the result. Some years ago he changed his style, went to San Francisco and devoted himself to portrait-painting. But stepmother Manhattan always draws her children home, and here he is back.

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S. Pessl.

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Today, in the celebrated shop across from the opera in Vienna, S. Pessl carries on the tradition of the Pessl name. The crowned heads to which he has ministered are evidenced by the interesting group of royal crests he is authorized to display above the windows of his typically Viennese shop.

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M. Pessl's advice is echoed by such famous specialists as Lina Cavalieri, of *Paris;* Elise Bock, of *Berlin;* Bertha Jacobson, of *London.* Wherever women seek the best skin care they are told by professional experts: safeguard beauty with Palmolive Soap.

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December 1929 The RED BOOK Magazine Volume LIV Number 2

EDWIN BALMER, *Editor*
DONALD KENNICOTT, *Associate*

A COMMON-SENSE EDITORIAL

Speed

By BRUCE BARTON

ONE of the most talented young surgeons that America has ever known died last year.

He was killed in an airplane, but that was not the real tragedy.

The real tragedy was that he took no vacations, had no recreations, no hobby. He was keyed up to such a pitch that the only thing which gave him any relaxation at all was to go up in a plane and fly at a hundred miles an hour. Anything else was too slow.

Recently I rode out to a golf course with three other men. The man who owned the car was constantly fussing at the chauffeur. "Turn here and avoid some of the traffic," he said. "Hurry up and get past that truck. Why do you let those fellows get ahead of you?"

Finally I remarked timidly that I supposed we were going out for pleasure, and that we had nothing to do until tomorrow. My friend looked at me as if my remark were sacrilegious—a violation of the spirit of American life.

An old gentleman who tends a railroad crossing in a country town sometimes confides to me his observations of the human race. He says that all sorts of people risk their lives in running under the gates after he has lowered them. Once on the other side, nine out of ten of them stop to watch the train go by.

People who know that I have met Calvin Coolidge often ask me about him. He is just as much a mystery to me as he was when I first met him ten years ago. But here are two stories which are illuminating.

One night in the White House he was reading an editorial which criticised him, and he came to this sentence: "The President never does anything until he has to."

He laid down the paper, took off his glasses, and considered the sentence as though it was an entirely new idea. "I guess that's true," he said finally. And then he added, "Should I?"

The other side-light was given me by Major Putnam, Librarian of Congress.

"Have you ever watched Coolidge in his office?" he asked. "He never hurries, never makes a useless movement. Even when he gets up from a chair it is done so slowly, so smoothly, as hardly to use any energy at all."

The Presidency has killed several men. It has so depleted others that they died very soon after serving their term of office. Coolidge came out of the White House weighing more, sleeping better, and more fit than when he went in.

Sometimes he seems like a hold-over from a previous century—the last survivor of the good old days before the Age of Speed.

Ten times more attractive

THE SMALL chocolates in the Prestige assortment are attractive, with their glossy coatings of chocolate in three shades. There is the creamy brown of the milk chocolate coating, the rich chocolate brown of the vanilla coating, the deeper tones of the semi-sweet chocolate. The graceful shapes and decorations make them little works of art.

But ten times more attractive, and candy-hunger compelling are the *centers* — that all-important part of a chocolate which is seldom seen.

When serving the Prestige Chocolates for dessert (on a silver dish) try the experiment of cutting the pieces in halves exposing the fruits, nuts, creams, caramels, nougats. All the coloring and richness one associates with the finest confections. Everyone recognizes the goodness of Whitman's but a feast for the eye is entirely overlooked unless one occasionally peeps inside, where we lavish so much care. On going beneath the surface Whitman's are *ten times more attractive.*

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AN INDIAN REGULUS

THE glory of Regulus, the Roman general, stands secure. His, indeed, is one of the brightest tents pitched upon the eternal camping-ground of fame.

Not because he was a conqueror and led a triumph; but because he was captured by the Carthaginians, and when they offered to spare his life if he would exhort Rome to stop the war, he refused and chose death.

Canonchet was a Narraganset Indian born after the landing of the Pilgrims; and he spent his youth in a most puzzling world.

We all know how Europeans were astonished and confused by what they found in America; still more perplexing and astounding was what the red man saw—the coming of a people endowed with purposes and powers utterly outside of Indian experience.

Massasoit, chief of the tribes first in contact with the Pilgrims, mistook Indian interests so completely that he made a peace treaty with the settlers—his motive being to secure an ally for his people against their enemies, the Narragansets. He succeeded and temporarily overawed the Narragansets; but the alliance was far more important to the Pilgrims. Indeed, it was their salvation; for it insured the friendship of neighboring tribes and thrust the hostile frontier fifty miles away.

By the time Massasoit's son Metacom—whom the English called King Philip—succeeded to the leadership, the Indians could see more clearly. The English swarmed over the land, dispossessing the red men, who roused at last to a common cause.

Philip and Canonchet organized the tribes, but now the Indians had against them no mere squad of ten or twenty men following Miles Standish; they faced "The Army of the United Colonies," with a general staff and regimental organization. The levy of Massachusetts, for one campaign, was 575 men; of Connecticut, 325; of Plymouth, 158.

The Indians struck in force, to exterminate the English or sweep them back to the sea. The first foray was in June, 1675; thereafter savage, merciless warfare—raid and surprise, the burning of towns and massacre, pursuit and punishment, ambush and pitched battle through summer, fall and winter.

Canonchet showed a real genius for leadership; but at last, in April, he was surprised by red men still friendly to the English, was captured and brought to the colonial camp. His captors gave him the choice allowed to the Roman Regulus—death or a word from him to his people to cease the war.

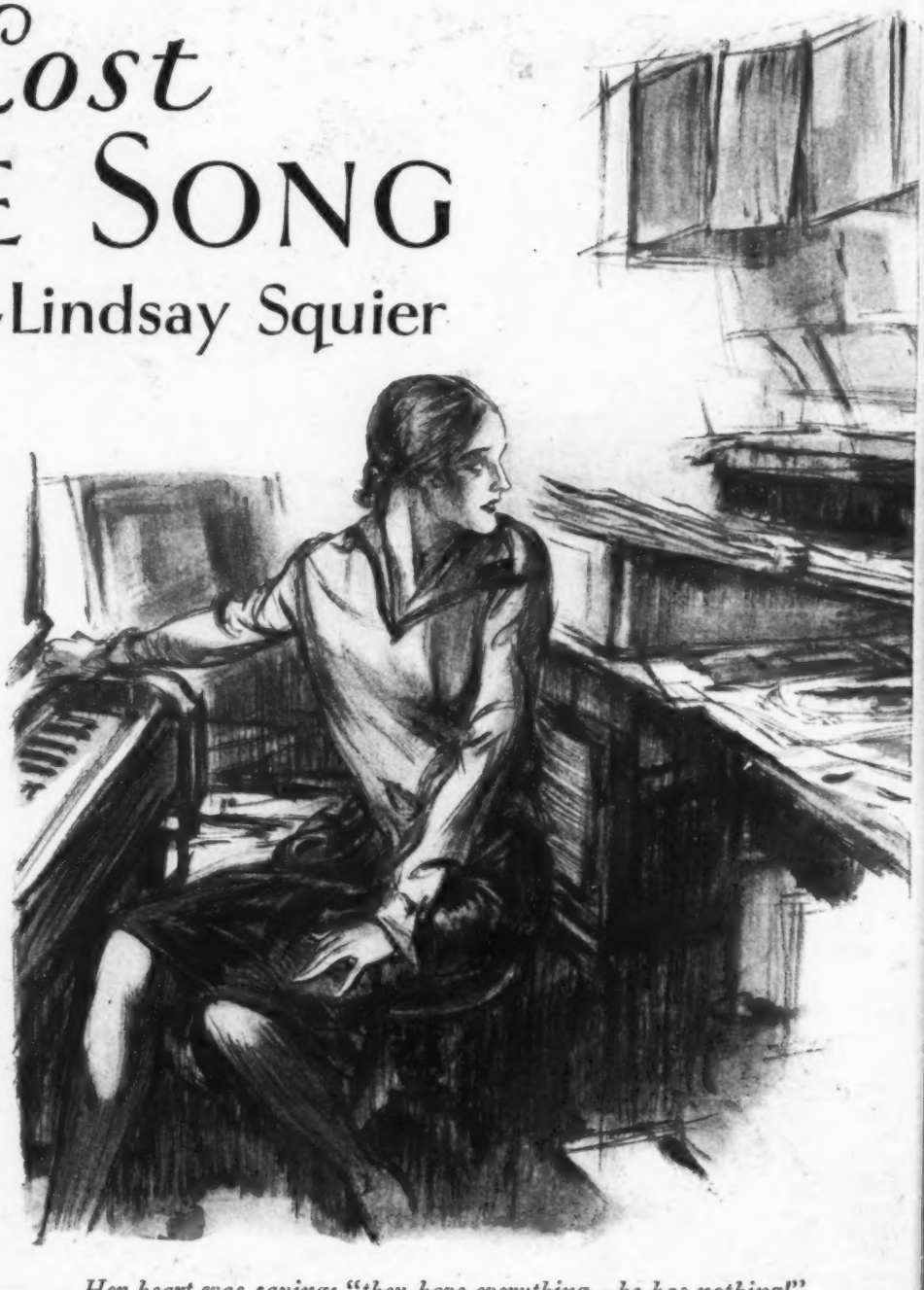
The English interpreter translated Canonchet's reply. "He says," runs the record, "that he likes it well that he die before his heart is soft or he has spoken unworthy of himself."

Canonchet was given, accordingly, to Oniaco, son of his life-long enemy Uncas, who shot him.

Lost LOVE SONG

by Emma-Lindsay Squier

"The sweetest joy, the wildest woe is love"



Her heart was saying: "they have everything—he has nothing!"

ERMINIE SWAZLOW intended to marry a musician for the same reason that other people vote the straight Democratic ticket or have curly hair—because it ran in the family. Behind the Swazlow name stretched unbroken generations of musicians, reaching back into obscure half-savage times in Bohemia, when a gypsy Swazlow, with turbulent black hair and considerably more letters to his name than the modern version possessed, played and sang the soldiers of the king to a victory over the Bulgars, and was thereafter made a prince of the realm, with a castle and a wife, and a most substantial income.

The women of the Swazlow line had always suffered—from the first lady, given in marriage to a gypsy prince who stabled his horses in the castle, to Maria Swazlow, Erminie's mother.

Josef Swazlow had been her one departure from a strictly conventional life as a choir-singer in a small town in Iowa. He had represented Romance when she heard him in a concert at the Town Opera-house. She had paid for the glittering delusion in which she married him with hard, chaotic years of work and child-bearing; with a life as foreign to her nature as that of a sedate, kindly disposed mare imprisoned with a cageful of brawling leopards and chattering monkeys.

In the first year of her marriage the twins had made their appearance, and were promptly named Faustus and Marguerite by Josef Swazlow, who followed the traditions of his ancestors in never asking or taking advice from a woman. The next following year, another daughter was born, and was christened Brünnehilde—although Maria had timidly suggested "Ethel" as being a more Christian, livable name. Josef always spoke of her as a "little grace-note." The fifth year another set of twins made their way painfully into a world that had long since ceased to owe its musicians a living. Josef called them Mimi and Rodolfo. And twelve months later Erminie was born to a household that was already on the verge of being a public charge, since Josef's small wages in a local orchestra did little more than pay the rent of the noisy, untidy house which the Swazlow brood infested. For the first and last time in her life, Maria Swazlow showed defiance. It was the feeble rolling of the brood-mare's eyes at the roaring leopards and the unspeakable monkeys.

"Call her Erminie if you like," she had said weakly, "but *I'm* going to call her Minnie! And if you want to be musical about it, you can tell people that she's a rest, a full stop!"

Erminie was with her mother when she died, ten years later. Faustus and Marguerite were giving a joint concert, with Brünnehilde assisting with a vocal number, and Mimi and Rodolfo making nuisances of themselves by trying out various seats in the

Illustrated by Henry Raleigh

"Look, Mother!" Mimi screamed. "We stole them for you! These are the ones that the ushers were going to hand over the footlights to Faustus and Marguerite and Hilda."

"Children!" cried Erminie—although she was a year younger than they. "Can't you see that Mother is—"

The dying woman on the bed turned her head ever so little. Somehow the flowers scattered around her, gave back to her face a beauty that the years had taken, long ago. Her eyes flickered open, and she smiled. It was to Erminie she spoke, the only one of her children to whom she had ever felt a kinship of similarity.

"Anyway—it hasn't been monotonous—"

Among the stolen flowers she sank into her last sleep.

theater, finally roosting noisily and conspicuously in the front box. Josef telephoned to Erminie after each number, always intending to ask how his sick wife was, but never getting any farther than a voluble, enthusiastic description of the success of each portion of the program.

"The *Andante* movement, Faustus flatted twice," he shouted into the phone, "but that was because Marguerite delayed the tempo of the accompaniment and excited him. But the *Allegro*—ah, you should have heard it, *mein Liebchen!* It was beautiful! Perfect! I was in tears of joy!"

"Father," Erminie broke in, "I think you ought to be here; Mother is—"

"Later!" his great voice boomed. "Brünnehilde goes now onto the stage to sing. The little fool is as white as the wall—"

The receiver clicked. The child went slowly into the dark, littered bedroom that all of Maria's years of effort could not keep in order. Erminie had her father's great dark eyes, and his sensitive oval face. But her hair was golden and softly wavy, as her mother's had been when she married Josef Swazlow.

The sick woman opened her eyes.

"Minnie," she said faintly, "don't you ever—marry—a musician!"

"I'm never going to marry anyone, Mother; I'm going to look after Father."

With an uncanny prescience derived from gypsy ancestors, she knew that her mother was going to die. And with the calmness of Maria herself, she accepted it fatalistically.

The dying woman's lips twisted into a wan smile.

"If that's your life plan—you might—just as well—marry one—" Her voice trailed away into silence.

Mimi and Rodolfo burst suddenly into the bedroom in a babble of excited laughter, loud, incoherent snatches of sentences, and a dazzling array of flowers, which they piled unceremoniously on the bed.

Although the youngest of the family, upon Erminie's slender shoulders fell the responsibility of the Swazlow ménage. She had inherited her mother's passion for cleanliness and order, and she possessed as a heritage from Josef a vigorous, vital personality that the poor Maria had never had. She ruled her father, the two turbulent sets of twins, and the grace-note Brünnehilde, with tact and determination. She settled their quarrels, cooked for them, mended them, and finally steered Faustus and Marguerite into a well-paying vaudeville act, in spite of her father's frantic disapproval.

She was seventeen when Brünnehilde eloped with a Mexican guitar player who was on the same bill with the twins. Erminie went after her and dragged her away almost from the nuptial altar amid a storm of tears and hysterics, and loud-voiced Spanish threats.

"You know you fall for a different man every time the moon changes," she had said sternly to the weeping near-bride, "and if you *must* marry a musician, pick out one who speaks English and uses the bathtub for something besides a place to keep the coal!"

She saw Mimi and Rodolfo through high school, where the pair were in perpetual difficulties by reason of truancy. In them, more intensely than the other children, burned the gypsy love of freedom. And Erminie breathed a sigh of relief when graduation was over and they entered a conservatory of music where they might be expected to keep out of mischief for a year or two.

Brünnehilde married very conventionally for the Swazlow family—an enterprising young publicity man who promised to make a prima donna of her. And Erminie stayed at home with a white-haired old man whose declining years were embittered by failing health, and the increased difficulty of obtaining pupils and orchestral work.

At twenty she was left alone. And the sudden emptiness of a life that had been filled with mature responsibilities drove her

almost to insanity. There was no one to take care of now. Faustus and Marguerite were headliners in vaudeville. Brünnehilde was happily, though somewhat stormily, awaiting motherhood. Mimi and Rodolfo had gone to Paris to pursue their studies further. No one needed her. And that, to Erminie, who all of her young life had been needed, was a condition darker and more hopeless than death itself.

She had been too busy to make friends of her own. Too busy even to devote the necessary time to a musical career. Besides, she seemed to lack the spark of genius inherent in the other children. Perhaps it was because of the "Minnie" in her. At any rate, she had never exhibited any artistic talent other than the ability to read popular music at sight, and an aptitude for playing by ear.

In the lonely house on her twentieth birthday, she wandered aimlessly about the living-room, beautifully clean now, but oh, so empty! No one remembered her birthday; no one had called. She paused before a Chinese mirror and stared at her reflection; a pale oval face with golden hair drawn back in a coiffure as simple as a nun's cap. Her mother's face—with her father's eyes. Great dark, restless eyes with shadows under them—she turned away abruptly and went to the piano.

Her long, sensitive fingers, feeling over the keys, touched the first chords of the prelude of "Tristan and Isolde." Almost of their own volition they crashed out beneath her hands, and a cold, shivering sensation went upward along her spine. Something was coming out of the music towards her, creeping like a rising tide over her conscious mind, enveloping her in a cold mist shot through with flashes of crimson—

She wanted to die! And by her own hand! The terrible music pulsed into a passionate cry, a longing, an insane desire for oblivion. Her breath caught in her throat in a choking sob. But the sound shattered the unholy spell that was upon her. She tore her hands away from the keys and covered her eyes.

It was with a feeling of escape from imminent peril that she went to bed that night. As if she had been standing on the brink of a bottomless abyss, tottering there, and had suddenly been snatched back to life and sanity.

On the following day she found work in the near-by city. It was fatalistically simple, as if it had been pre-ordained. There was a placard in the window of Herzog's Music Shoppe: *"Wanted, expert sight reader for popular songs."* She stared at it for a long moment, wondering if she dared try it. Whether, if put to the test, she could play acceptably.

To the owner of the store, she was a godsend. The girl before her had been flip and overpainted, prolific at carrying on long conversations with favored boy friends, but unwilling, to the point of rudeness, to exert herself for women customers. Solomon Herzog prided himself on a knowledge of character—although his selection of the former salesgirl had not justified his opinion of himself. And it took but one look at Erminie's smart, simple outfit of black, with a close-fitting turban softened by the merest shimmer of golden hair, to know that he was dealing with a lady. Inwardly he prayed that she could read music well. But the job was hers before ever she touched the piano.

And so for Erminie a new life commenced. A busy daytime life, bounded on the north, south, east and west by tinkling melodies and saccharine popular songs. Perhaps Josef Swazlow turned over in his grave. But Erminie did not mind the frank vacuousness of the music. Again she was in contact with people, with problems, with life. People came to know her; she was "good for business."

She had moved into a little attic apartment in a building that had once been a smart address for portrait painters and high-priced music teachers, but which had been left behind with the uptown march of the business district, and was now occupied by lesser lights of the musical fraternity—lights so dim, in fact, as to be almost invisible.

For Erminie it was rich satisfaction again to hear the melodious discord of pianos, violins and 'cellos that resounded from roof to

She opened the door and leaned against it, trembling. The man at

basement. She came in time to identify the various people she met in the narrow halls with the musical sounds that percolated up through the floor at night. The shoddy-looking old German belonged to the 'cello. Sometimes she heard him playing the folk songs of his homeland; and sometimes the instrument would throb to the gigantic motifs of "Die Walküre" and "Götterdämmerung." The thin, underfed young Spaniard owned a piano, on which he gave a few lessons to those of his own race; and there were half a dozen violinists of as many nationalities.

The one with whom she felt the greatest kinship was, strangely enough, a person she had never seen—at least not knowingly. The east window of her snug little apartment looked out on a narrow airshaft. And the lodger one floor down, and exactly opposite, was a pianist and a composer.

Her window was just above his, so that she could catch no glimpse of the interior of the room. It was visible to her only as a rectangle of light, across which sometimes a tall black shadow moved. But the music that came floating up at night spoke of a vital personality, intensely alive, keenly susceptible to thoughts and impressions.

She loved best of all the rambling tone pictures that she felt were his experiences of the day. One winter night when the first snow lay on the ground she was awakened by the sound of the piano. He must have just come in from the starlit purity of the sleeping world. For the music commenced softly, like the crystalline falling of snowflakes. It breathed the peace of whiteness and starlight, the cold yet ecstatic thrill of air; it was a tone-poem of winter.

The Erminie in her lay still and drank it in and held her breath with delight. The Minnie in her wanted to fling on a warm robe, rush to the window, lean far over and cry down to the opposite rectangle of light—"Write it down! Don't lose it! You'll forget it if you don't write it!" Thus her father had played—and would never take the trouble to make permanent the lovely things his mind and fingers dreamed out together.

Sometimes the music had the impish humor of a little boy; and sometimes it was somber and heavy-footed as if he found the world a tired, drab place in which to live.

And then—she would never forget the night she heard it—he played the theme of love, newly found. Very delicate, uncertain in its wonder, with an undercurrent of stirring pulses and vague, trembling desires. A less sensitive person than Erminie would not have known it for what it was. But she, who had the gypsy blood of the Swazlows in her veins, never doubted the meaning of the music. For an instant her heart contracted, and a curious, unreasoning ache shot through her being. She did not know whether he was young or old. But somehow she had thought of him as belonging to her. That he knew nothing of her existence did not matter. She had sent her sympathy and understanding to him in psychic, but vital waves, and she had felt that subconsciously he knew and responded—that between them there was a bond, intangible and invisible, having nothing to do with the material world. She had almost felt that in the world of dreams they met as friends and comrades; and that oftentimes the music that he played was a memory of the things they had seen and done in the shadowy outer world of sleep. Now he had found love. She knew again the intense loneliness of soul isolation.

On the next night he played the theme again. And followed it with a melody so simple, yet so imbued with the sweetness of heart satisfaction, that Erminie knew that he was playing a tone-picture of the woman he loved. Over and over he played it; and Erminie lay sleepless in the darkness wondering if the woman knew and appreciated. She felt a fierce, almost maternal longing that the precious gift should find a casket worthy of its luster.

With the approach of the Christmas holiday Erminie had scant time to think of the unknown composer. Solomon Herzog took advantage of the season to keep the store open at night; and Erminie's tired fingers became heavy, leaden weights.

One day the weather changed abruptly from crisp cold to an unseasonable warmth. Then there was a heavy rain that transformed the snow into slush, and melted the Christmas shopping crowds into straggling fragments. It was almost like Sunday in the Herzog Music Shoppe. And Erminie, with unfilled hours to go through before closing time, found her mind reverting again and again to the musician whom she did not know, and had never seen.

Had his love-affair progressed happily, she wondered. She was afraid that something had happened. She remembered that always of late she had been awakened by harsh, inharmonious chords and vicious, short runs like the plunging attack of a chained wild animal. Her father had played things like that when he was out of work, when the landlord was pressing him for the rent, when he quarreled with an orchestra leader and lost a badly needed position.

Outside, the rain beat down with a dull, torrential monotony. Erminie sighed, got up and rearranged the long rows of popular music, her mind far away. She was thinking of the lovely, simple melody that used to come climbing in over the window-sill at night.

"There's nothing here that has the catchiness of that piece," she told herself. Then she drifted back to the piano, a slim black figure with brown eyes, and hair in a soft, *(Please turn to page 101)*

the piano jerked around and stared at her with unbelieving eyes.

HEART OF THE NORTH

In the land of far distances and few people, strangers suddenly appear; and their pursuers follow a trail of tragedy

by William Byron Mowery

Illustrated by Herbert M. Stoops

The Story So Far:

AT first Father Claverly could not believe he was witnessing a robbery. Here in this sub-Arctic North where outlawry was rare and furtive, here on the mighty Mackenzie where river boats time and again carried unguarded cargoes of half a million in furs and gold, a brazen daylight attack upon a big steamer seemed a thing impossible. But—there they stood, six bearded ruffians with rifles who had slipped aboard and now stood covering crew and passengers. One man alone took the fatal risk of drawing a gun against them—the mate Montgomery; and he was ruthlessly shot down before the eyes of his little girl. . . . . And then, after the steamer had been looted of furs and gold, the robbers took with them in their canoes a young woman passenger, later released, as shield against pursuing bullets.

As though every man aboard realized that no one dared stir, that retribution must come from elsewhere, a whisper started, spontaneously, from a dozen points at once: "Baker! Sergeant Alan Baker of the Mounted—at Fort Endurance."

A good man indeed, Sergeant Baker. Coming here to Endurance as a corporal seven years ago, with Jimmy Montgomery and Curt Spaulding as his constables, he had showed his worth as a "Northern man" and detachment leader. With his record like that, and with Superintendent Williamson as his friend, Alan had expected to get his commission last fall when the post was raised to an inspectorate. But a political appointee named Haskell, a newcomer to the Force, a worse than newcomer to the North, had been given the inspectorship and the command.

This came only a short time after Baker had sent his best friend Spaulding to his death in the line of duty on a desperate Northern patrol. Spaulding's sister Elizabeth had been left helpless—in her own opinion at least. And Baker, partly out of loyalty to his dead friend, had engaged himself to her.

Though there was little passion in Alan's emotions toward Elizabeth, there was a sturdy loyalty and a certain blind idealization of her. But deep in his heart rose the fear that their marriage was going to be a terrible mistake. Something lacked in their betrothal; it seemed to Alan that he could never penetrate to Elizabeth's thoughts and feelings.

In brooding hours, when he thought of another girl in his life, of Joyce MacMillan and his comradely intimacy with her, the old longing for her surged through him, and he grew bitter at the circumstances which had separated him and Joyce. . . . .

It was while Baker was resisting another of Elizabeth's urgings that he leave the Mounted and go into some more profitable business that a constable burst in with the news of the robbery of the *Midnight Sun*. At once Baker went to Inspector Haskell, and out of his superior experience and knowledge proposed a plan of pursuit. But Haskell overruled him—ordered him to divide his force of six men when they reached the Thal-Azzah swamp in which the bandits had presumably taken refuge. . . . .

On the upriver journey Baker and his men stopped at the trading-post of Dave MacMillan, Joyce's father. He was away, and in his storeroom they found furs stolen from the *Midnight Sun*. Baker told Joyce of this, and in the face of her anger at the accusation urged her to get the truth of the matter from her father. And then when the mist had hidden her from him, he turned his eyes ahead. Somewhere on up the spruce-buried Alooska were those six bandit strangers, rifle-armed and desperate and certain to give battle. Against them he was pitting his life and the lives of his men today. *(The story continues in detail:)*

FIFTY miles above the MacMillan trading-store, where a spur of low hills flanked the Alooska, Alan ordered Pedneault to swerve in toward the north bank and stop.

He believed those bandits could not be very far ahead now. If he failed to sight them before they heard the launch coming, it meant disaster to his patrol and possible death to his men. Across this silent wilderness the roar of the engine carried for five or six miles. Warned of pursuit, those criminals might lift their canoes back into the timber and let the police go harmlessly past. Likelier still, they might lay an ambush where the river was narrow, and open on the launch with repeating rifles at a murderous point-blank range. But if he located them upstream, he could slip up on them quietly in the paddle craft and lay a deadly ambush himself.

The grim ruthless mood of those moments when he stood in the dim cabin of the *Midnight Sun* still burned like a flame in Alan. In his Mounted years he had lived up to the tradition of "shooting last," and had drilled it into his men; but he felt that these bandits who had murdered Jimmy Montgomery and abducted a girl had forfeited all right to human mercy.

Taking a pair of binoculars, he splashed ashore and hurried up a hill to its summit. There on the ridge-line a single tree grew out of a tangle of glacier-scarred boulders. Climbing to its swaying topmost branch, he had a clear view of a long river "straight" reaching twenty miles upstream.

The timber was fast thinning out now. To north and east the country was taking on the wild amphibious character of the watery Thal-Azzah. From his lofty perch a dozen great muskegs were visible, cut by a network of small sluggish creeks and dotted with half a thousand lakes.

Mile after mile his glasses moved up the Alooska, on and on into the hazy distance. He came at last to the great sweeping bend faraway northeast where vision was cut off. Nothing, nothing whatsoever, of two creeping black dots. The bandits were twenty miles ahead at least.

As he hurried back down to the launch, he began to realize that those two canoes had traveled swifter than he had thought possible. They probably had not stopped at all during the semi-darkness, but had driven themselves on, throwing all their strength into this dash for the great Forks of the Alooska and the Thal-Azzah on beyond.

For the first time in his police experience Alan found himself ill at ease and uncertain of what he was running into. This entire affair—robbery, murder, escape—had an element of darkness to it. Though he could understand, on the assumption of Dave MacMillan's guilt, how the bandits knew just the right moves to make in this dimly known country, still he was utterly unable to explain how six absolute strangers, six bearded men of outlandish sort, could get into this country unseen. Who were they, where

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had they come from, how had they got in here unknown to everybody? The whole thing was uncanny. He hardly knew what to expect of them next.

Splashing back upon the launch, he told his men tersely: "They're not in sight yet, and I could see for twenty miles. We've got to meet up with them before they reach the Forks. They're making tracks. Ped, you have light to drive by now. We'll take our chances."

It was chances they did take, during that next half-hour. Dangerous at all times from floating débris and shifting sand-bars, the river was doubly treacherous now, with granite boulders hidden beneath its freshet-muddied waters.

Above the sweeping bend which had cut off his view, Alan raced ashore again, climbed another tree and searched ahead with aching eyes. No far straight reach this time, but a number of sharp curves where timbered headlands hid long portions of the river from him. Cursing at the loss of precious minutes, he hung in the tree-top, thumbing the glasses one-handed, and waited till he made sure that if the canoes had been out of sight behind one of those timbered points they would have reappeared on the open water.

Still he caught no glimpse of them.

Twice again that morning, between Pedneault's reckless dashes, he hurried ashore and futilely searched ahead. Something had gone wrong. The patrol should be within sight of them. They had either dodged aside, or had done something to give them a big edge over what he thought possible.

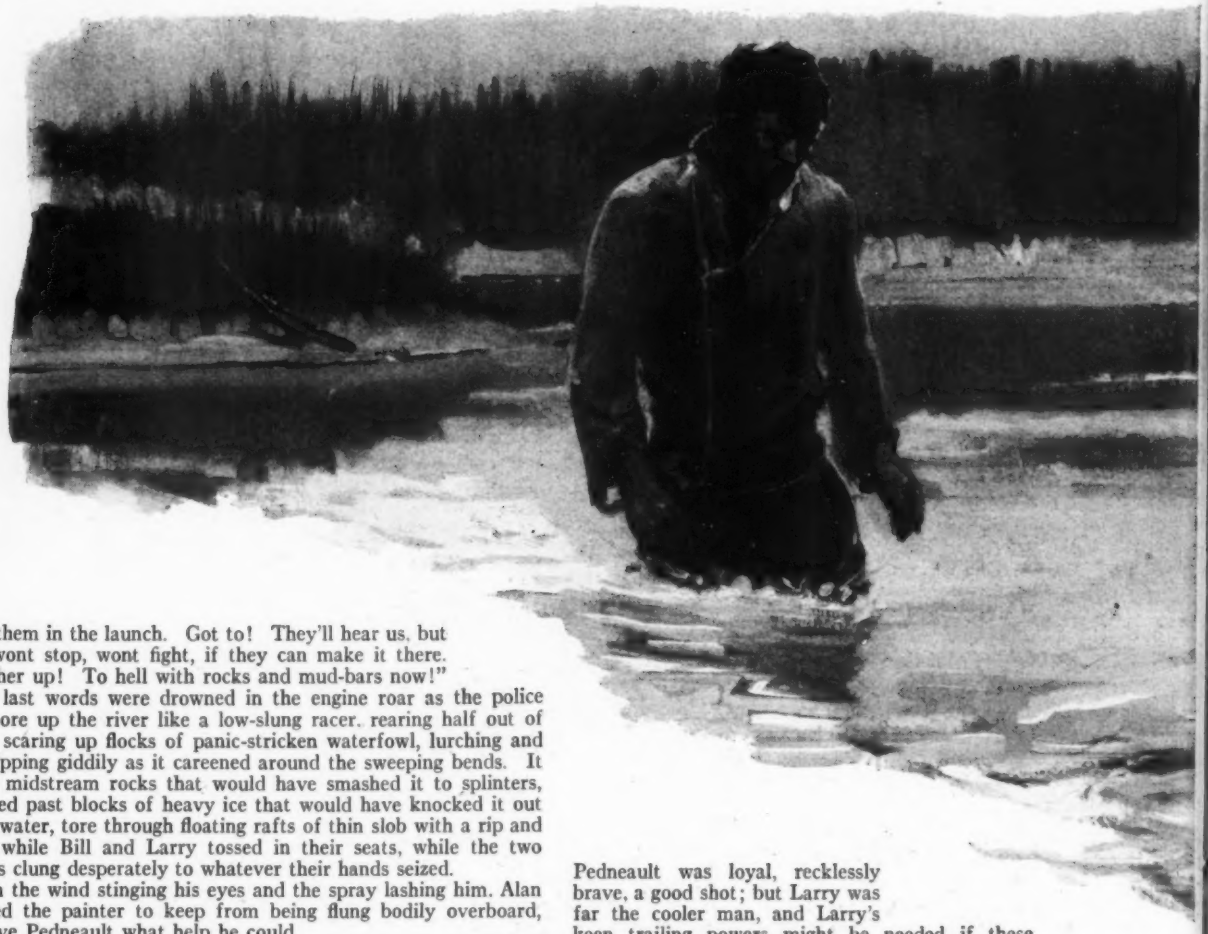
It was afterward, when the waters of the Alooska had given up their ghastly secret, that Joyce MacMillan listened to the accounts of several Yellow-knife men and gazed upon certain grim evidence, and pieced together the story of how those bandits had been able to keep in the lead. But Alan knew nothing of that now; he knew only that something had upset all his calculations.

Fifteen miles from the Alooska Forks he went ashore a last time and climbed a squat tree. In his desperate focusing he missed his quarry at the first sweep. But in the next, the glasses picked up a pair of tiny black objects, like bugs crawling along a silver ribbon. . . . .

He jumped out of the tree, leaped down the slope.

Splashing aboard, he flung all caution to the winds. "Throw into it, Pedneault! We've got to beat them to the Forks. We'll close

At the edge of the flags a gun cracked, a rope of flame reached out, a bullet ricocheted off the water. Alan thrust his gun over the muskrat-house and emptied it at the flashes.



in on them in the launch. Got to! They'll hear us, but they wont stop, wont fight, if they can make it there. Open her up! To hell with rocks and mud-bars now!"

His last words were drowned in the engine roar as the police craft tore up the river like a low-slung racer, rearing half out of water, scaring up flocks of panic-stricken waterfowl, lurching and side-slipping giddily as it careened around the sweeping bends. It grazed midstream rocks that would have smashed it to splinters, skimmed past blocks of heavy ice that would have knocked it out of the water, tore through floating rafts of thin slob with a rip and crash, while Bill and Larry tossed in their seats, while the two recruits clung desperately to whatever their hands seized.

With the wind stinging his eyes and the spray lashing him, Alan clutched the painter to keep from being flung bodily overboard, and gave Pedneault what help he could.

Toward the end of the dash, Bill and Larry crept up past the driver's seat and crouched behind the prow half deck, their rifles at ready, their hats jammed tight upon their foreheads. Slumped down out of sight below the gunwale, Whipple was fumbling at his cartridge-belt, equally fearful of a rifle-fight ahead and of the dizzy wild dash of the launch.

The craft careened around the last bend, a scant mile from the great Y of the Alooska. A clear open stretch lay in front. Dashing the blinding spray from his eyes, Alan rose precariously to his feet, looked, looked twice; and his heart sank as the truth was borne upon him.

The canoes had beaten him to the Forks.

He had come within five minutes of overhauling them in the launch—and then had missed—had missed by a mile that loomed gigantic as two hundred. All his hopes, his plans, had centered on running them down before they reached the fatal Forks. But they had beaten him. They had heard the thundering boat, had flung their whole strength into the race; and now were whipping on eastward along one or other of the Alooska branches.

The launch would have to be abandoned at the Forks. From what Joyce had told him of the water stages, he knew the police boat would be stranded or wrecked within half a mile if it attempted those shallow streams. He must take to paddle-canoes.

As the hurtling craft covered that last mile, Alan fought down his bitter disappointment, and looked steadily at an ugly sinister situation. The best he could hope for now was a fight against odds of two to one. There was a fearful likelihood that the three of his party who met up with those criminals would get wiped out.

He planned swiftly. The chances were ten to one that the bandits had darted up the left branch leading northeast into the Thal-Azzah. That conviction was a focus point of his quick decisions: "I'll take one canoe and two men; I'll follow that left branch. I'll take Bill with me; he's a red-haired devil in a fight; he's our best shot; he'll be dependable in whatever comes. But the third man—Ped or Larry?" Between those two, both splendid men, both experienced veterans of many a patrol, he debated quickly. Pedneault was loyal, recklessly brave, a good shot; but Larry was far the cooler man, and Larry's keen trailing powers might be needed if these bandits cut aside.

He made up his mind: "I'll send Ped up the right branch with Burgoon and Whipple. Bill and Larry and I'll shoot up the left. *We'll* be the ones to do business."

As the great Y of the Alooska loomed up, he turned and gestured to Hardsock and Larry. Silently understanding, they crept back to the stern deck, unlashed the canoes and had them ready by the time that Pedneault, slowing down the launch, steered it in between two little willow islands at the Forks and stopped.

Alan ordered him: "Ped, take these two men and whip up the south branch. Larry and Bill and I'll cover the north. If you sight them, don't pitch into that pack. You'd be fighting six men single-handed. If they did happen to go that way, you drop back here to the Forks and wait for us. We'll be able to track them in that timber country. Now, Ped, I'm trusting you; do exactly as I say. Let's pile out. They can't be over a mile and a half away."

Bill snarled: "Hell's blue blazes, Alan! Let's stick together. Splitting up like this is the damnedest fool trick I ever heard of—"

"Shut up!" Alan snapped. "General's orders, not mine. Every damned thing you say or do will be tattled to him." He tossed the launch anchor into the mud. "I said pile out. Let's be moving." He stepped down into a canoe, stood his rifle between his knees, caught up a paddle.

Cursing beneath their breath, Bill and Larry clambered in with him, and the two canoes separated. . . . .

Alan's estimate that his quarry could not be more than a mile and a half in the lead, was true enough; but a stern chase is a long chase, and if those bandits were aching from exhaustion, they had the fear of death in their hearts to goad them on.

Not knowing what minute would plunge his small squad into a rifle-battle, Alan instructed:

"When we come up with them, when we get in fair distance, Bill, you do the long-range rifle talking. Larry and I'll steady the boat and keep you in range. Shoot low, Bill, low; you can miss the men but not the boats. Glance your bullets off the water. Tear

Larry must have come out alone. With half a dozen holes spouting water into it, the craft was filling.

holes in those canoes. If we get that pack afoot, we've got them."

The silence, after the all-morning roar of the launch, was like a din in their ears. Alan could hear Larry's harsh breathing, the swish of water in the V-wake behind, and Bill's grunting gasp at each heave of his paddle. Clothes sodden with sweat, paddles bending in quick powerful rhythm, they toiled on.

A whole hour, an hour of terrific labor, went by without sight or sound of the bandits. Every bend of the tortuous river was a hope to Alan; every open stretch beyond was a disappointment. Fear gripped him that those bandits had taken the south branch of the Alooska. Frank Pedneault with two raw recruits might run into an ambush; or Ped might attack them, reckless fellow that he was, practically lone-handed, and get killed.

The chase was entering the Thal-Azzah itself—that watery wilderness of lakes and labyrinthine channels and muskeg thousands of square miles in extent. They were out of the timber country; the land was too soggy for trees. The last struggling tamarack and paper birch had yielded to "niggerhead," the deerbush to tall flags and marsh reeds higher than a man's head and hands. The river had become sluggish and broad and shallow, with mud-flats reaching back from water-edge. In long S-curves it wound on deeper into the barrens, as fat and lazy and sinuous as a coiled boa.

So far, no tributary streams were coming in; the bandits had had no chance to slip aside. But not far ahead the branch split into a dozen channels leading in every direction. Pursuit would end there. A few miles more, and those canoes would be swallowed in the watery oblivion of the Thal-Azzah.

And then, as Alan skirled around a reedy headland, his prophecy yesterday to Haskell, his conviction, founded on long man-hunting experience, that the bandits would surely follow this left branch, was suddenly proved true to the full. On ahead, a scant thousand yards, he caught one fleeting glimpse of two heavily-laden canoes that carried six men.

Dipping faster, deeper, he and Bill and Larry paddled at a killing pace to come up within rifle range. The river was so winding that they could see only a few hundred yards ahead. There was danger, a terrible danger, of running headlong into a blind ambush where all three of them would be killed outright and their canoe sunk before they even could start to shoot back. Every stroke, every

curve, every clump of flags they skimmed close past, was a deadly peril. They knew it, but they dared not slow up. . . . .

As they skirled out upon a shallow little lake fringed about with dense tall flags, Larry suddenly heaved back on his paddle.

"Lift out! Look! Alan, look over there!"

Alan looked where he pointed, at the north shore, at the wall of tall reeds. And then he too saw. By himself he might never have noticed it; but now with Larry pointing it out, the sign was conspicuous. A path had been broken through the flags; the reeds were parted, some of them trampled, their tops bent to either side.

It told the story. Hard-pressed, those men had whipped ashore to shake off pursuit, had lifted canoes to shoulder, and were trying to cut north and hit another channel.

Thinking only that they were so hot on the trail that their quarry had taken to cover, Alan and Bill slung the canoe upon their shoulders; and with Larry in the lead, following the signs, they started at a lope back through the flags.

Within a few hundred yards they came to a little creek, a sluggish muskrat highway that led north. The bandits had taken to it. Too shallow for a canoe, they had had to wade. So recently had they passed, the water was still roiled from their boots.

The little creek took Alan's party a thousand yards north to a lake, a deep blue lake covering several acres; and there, within the Thal-Azzah itself, late in the afternoon, the long relentless chase came to its end.

Larry, a dozen steps in the lead, glimpsed the silvery sheen of water ahead; and stopping dead-short, he motioned Bill and Alan to be cautious. The other two turned aside into the reeds and crept up to him.

"You spotted them, Larry?" Bill asked.

"I think maybe so. I don't see anything of the men themselves, but— We'll sneak out closer where we can get a better look-see."

They bellied forward toward the lake edge where the flags were thin and they had clear view.

The lake was deserted except for a few timid mud-hens skulking among the reeds. There were no waterfowl on its surface, as there should have been; the bandits had flushed them. On the east side a channel led away, plenty deep for canoes.

Bill saw the channel, saw nothing of the bandits, and demanded sharply: "What're we stopping here for, Larry? See the creek yonder? They might have left by it."

"I don't think so. I think they're right close."

"You better be damn' good and sure of that! If they're making tracks on east while we're laying here—"

"Shut up, Bill," Alan interposed. "Let Larry have his head. He can trail circles around you and me put together."

After several minutes of waiting, Larry pointed directly across the lake, and stated quietly:

"You see that big patch of flags over there, about thirty or forty yards back from the lake? See that little run leading back into them? That's where our men are hiding. They're laying low along that little run."

The other men had seen nothing, heard nothing whatsoever; yet Larry's tones left no doubt that he *knew*.

"Good Lord!" Bill gasped, startled by his comrade's uncanny powers. "How do you know all that?"

"Well, I just noticed a rat start up that run. He came back in a hurry. Then, there's a silent spot over there where I don't hear any bird or animal calls. And then some other signs." He was silent for half a minute. Finally he whispered: "I'll show you a sign. You see that pair of canvasbacks a-coming this way?" Very cautiously parting the screen of flags with his hand, he pointed across the lake and on north over the acres of marshland. "Watch those ducks! They're flying low, making for this lake. Canvasbacks like blue water. Watch 'em close."

Skimming just over the flags, the pair of graceful Anatinæ came on; but just as they stopped beating and started the glide down upon the lake, they suddenly breasted high up in the air, exactly over the spot Larry had indicated. Veering away, they winged swiftly out of sight into the west.

Alan glanced admiringly at his lean-faced partner. No novice himself at water-dogging or following a Strong Woods trail, he could fully appreciate what Larry had just done. To spot those hidden men so infallibly, on such slight clues—how simple when explained, how magical beforehand! Not one Swampy Cree or Chippewyan in a hundred could match the trick that Larry just now had shown them so casually. And yet, Alan thought, Haskell had broken Younge for not being facile enough with yes-sir's and salutes.

"Why d'you suppose they're laying low over there, Alan?" Larry asked. "Why didn't they keep traveling?"

"There was a danger they'd run into us if they kept on the move. They're waiting for dusk, giving us time to get out of this particular territory. They've probably got a sentinel posted to watch their back-trail. They think they've slipped us. If they don't suspect we're around, we can surprise them that much harder."

Lying there in the reeds and bog, studying the bandit covert, Alan tried to plan. If all five of his men had been here, the outcome would have been swift and certain. He could have come at the bandits from either side, cut off chance of escape, boxed them between two fires and deliberately shot them down. But he had split his party at the Alooska Forks, as Haskell ordered.

Bill and Larry had been holding a whispered debate, and now they put their ideas up to Alan. Bill wanted to sneak closer and pitch into the six criminals forthwith. Younge wanted to stay here in the water-edge flags and wait. He urged that in all probability the bandits at twilight would come back across the lake and leave by its sole outlet. Three men in cover could rip up their canoes and kill the men in half a dozen rounds.

Alan saw weaknesses in either idea. Bill's fire-eating plan would be nearly suicidal, though it had the merit of forcing the battle. Larry's plan all depended upon the bandits' coming back across the lake. They might not do that; they might start on north to hit the next waterway, and so escape without a shot being fired.

Still he caught no glimpse of them.

As he planned, rejected and planned again in a struggle to overcome those heavy odds, a brooding quiet settled over the little lake. Waterfowl began dropping back upon the limpid blue surface; muskrats, abroad all day in this season, reappeared along the edges; a pair of stately trumpeter swans winged out of the east and glided down and floated out in the center like great white puffs of feathers.

Alan finally came to his decision.

"We've got to carry the fight to them, and we've got to keep them from getting away by that creek yonder. There's only one way we can do that. Bill and I are going to circle around them on foot and come at them from the other side. We'll get there somehow, even if we have to swim part way. We'll belly up as close as we can. With any luck at all, we ought to get into a position where we can put two or three of them out of business at the very beginning before they wake up to us.

"If our luck is out, if they discover we're sneaking up, they'll probably try to back away from us. They wont fight if they can help it. Why should they—some of them getting wounded or killed maybe—if they can get out of it? They'll try to whip back across this lake and dodge into that channel yonder. Now, Larry, you'll stay here to head that off. Keep out of sight yourself; wait till they get out into the middle; have a couple or three extra magazines handy. When they get in good range, open up on them. We two'll break through to the lake-edge

She drew near him. "I'd have given in, dear, before I'd seen you unhappy."

and help you out. Shoot at the wind-water line of their canoes. Don't try to get those men at all. *Sink those canoes.* We don't care about the men. Let them swim ashore and hide if they want to. On foot a man can't make ten miles a week in this muskrat country. With no tent, no shelter, the mosquitoes and flies would drive them crazy, and they'd fall into our hands.

"We've got about two hours yet till beginning twilight. That'll give us time to carry out my idea carefully. We're going to have just one chance at them. If we muddle it, they'll be gone. In these flags, in all this maze of channels, they could lose us in three or four hundred yards. If you understand now what's cut out for us, we'll be starting."

Both men nodded. . . . .

Bill and Alan backed away with infinite caution. One flushing waterfowl would raise all the others; the lake by this time was alive with merganser, teal, ducks, wavies; and the pair of swan, looking around warily, were outstretching their long necks as though sensing an enemy unseen. *(Please turn to page 128)*

SHOW-DOWN

Two very modern young people prove how awful it would be if they literally obeyed their parents

"I simply cannot go down in this gown;

YOU say you're so unlucky that if you threw a ten-dollar bill up in the air it would come down a summons? Well, but darling Rosamond, if you're unlucky, you ought to do something about it, really you ought! What I mean to say is, bad luck is so often a person's own fault, and if they would only take steps about it, why, first thing you know, they'd catch up to their good luck again!

Think of my own case, darling, and the terrible jam I was in about my Dickey. Yes, of course he's still my ideal, dear, and while he's often shattered he's seldom actually broke, and I've never been sorry for what I did, although at the time I thought I'd simply die! But I didn't even dare to die, Rosamond, because with the immigration laws, I couldn't be sure that the quota for heaven wasn't full just then; and besides, Dickey was very much alive, even if I wasn't seeing anything of him, owing to Mamma's attitude.

Well, dear, we were down at our place at Rosemere, Long Island—you know, the ancestral palace which Father built so that my brother Cedric Frederick and I could point with pride when we married and made an ancestor out of Dad. The dear thing had counted a lot on that program ever since he made his millions, and so of course had Mamma, and that was why my picking out Dickey as a prospective partner in the ancestor-manufacturing business was such a blow to her. Because you see, dearest, Dickey was just an actor at the time, and Mamma would have preferred buying me a nice French title, since the exchange was so good. Or else she'd have liked me to land a boy from one of the aristocratic American families who date back to the brown Stone Age, and who had got out of the wholesale grocery business long before Daddy even got into it, much less invented his famous Highlands Dried Crême of Heather. But Mamma had chosen her own husband, so I guess it runs in our family, and I had chosen Dickey.

What do I mean, he was just an actor? Well, he was just barely an actor, dearest! He'd tried a good many other jobs, so when he couldn't find anything else to do, he thought he'd act. But nobody else seemed to think so, and he was having a wretched time of it, and quite unjustly, because he could imitate practically anybody on the stage. Why, when he did Eddie Cantor or Al Jolson, well, you could hardly tell the difference. But Mamma didn't appreciate him one bit.

"Now, Mother," I told her, "kindly remember there are plenty of actors who make as much as a thousand dollars for a single performance!"

"Stuff and nonsense!" said she. "The day that young man of yours gets a thousand dollars for a single performance, I'll consider your marrying him, and that's a safe promise!"

So you see, Rosamond, how hopeless it was! The nearest Dickey had got to the footlights so far, had been a front-row seat at the Follies. And then, just when things were too depressing for words,

by
Nina Wilcox Putnam

Illustrated by C. D. Mitchell

ST. LOUIS PERIODICAL ROOM

you make me look positively immodest!"

Mr. and Mrs. Marger were invited for a week-end, and I was driven to taking those steps I mentioned before.

But before we heard of their impending visit, the usual row had started at the breakfast-table. Have you ever noticed, Rosamond, that breakfast-tables start worse rows than even bridge-tables? I was late in getting down.

"Good morning, Daughter," said Dad, over the top of the *Times*. "You must be feeling fine this morning, your lips are so red!"

Of course I had a little make-up on, Rosamond, for I'm not accustomed to coming downstairs particularly nude, but I said nothing, because what was the use? Dad may claim he objects to make-up, but I notice he always turns his head to look after it!

"When I was a girl," Mother said coldly, "I was always on time for breakfast. My parents would not have allowed me to be late!"

"When you were a girl, Mother darling," I said sourly, because to tell the truth, Rosamond, I'd had a late night, "there wasn't anything to do except be on time—being on time was an excitement in itself!"

"We didn't look for excitement," said Mother primly, "the way young people do nowadays! When I was a girl, we were satisfied to stay at home in the evening, occasionally, and do a little embroidery, or read a book!"

"Gosh! How awful!" I yawned. "Where were you last night, dear? Out at that new night-club on the Point, weren't you?"

My father laid down his paper and looked at me severely over the tops of his glasses.

"Where your mother and I go is another matter!" he said sternly. "We are adults and can do as we please. But your mother is quite right in her criticism of your behavior, Natacha Highlands! I understand from the footman that you did not get in until after two o'clock again this morning. Where were you?"

"Dancing!" I replied with a shrug.

"Well, if it occurs again, I'm going to take away your latchkey!" Dad announced with an air of finality.

"Natacha dear," said Mamma with all the sweet quietness of a panther about to spring, "I understand from Francine that you wore that green frock I had told you to send back—the one with the transparent skirt! Now, I suppose, it will have to be paid for. But I absolutely forbid you to put it on again."

"But Mother, it's so chic!" I wailed in despair. "It's the very latest thing from Paris, and several of the girls have them!"

"I don't care, my dear, it's a very immodest gown!" declared

I got up and showed them a new step; but it didn't get much of a hand, except

Mother, "and I can't endure your wearing it! When I was a girl, we dressed quite differently. My mother wouldn't have dreamed of allowing me to appear in such a dress."

"Well, what on earth did you wear?" I demanded, thoroughly angry now. "Some old frumpy thing, full of petticoats, I suppose! What's that got to do with this day and age, anyway?"

"Modesty is never old-fashioned, my dear child!" exclaimed Mamma. "Let me tell you, young woman, that when I was a girl, we didn't speak to our parents in that tone, either! We were decent and well-mannered! And we didn't indulge in cocktails and jazz bands, and sitting out in parked cars until all hours of the morning! I assure you, I never even heard of such a thing when your father and I were young. Honestly, Natacha, I can't see why you carry on the way you do!"

"Do you really think the old stuff you used to pull was more attractive, Mother?" I asked curiously.

"I most certainly do!" she replied.

"Then why didn't you keep it up?" I asked innocently. "Because, dear, you know you do everything you can to look like a flapper, and I must say you make a pretty good job of it!"

Well, Rosamond darling, although Mother really is a good deal of a success as far as looks go, goodness only knows what that remark might have started except for the entrance my brother Cedric Frederick made at the moment. True to accustomed schedule, he was half an hour later to breakfast than I was, and I was always twenty minutes late.

"Any clam broth?" my brother inquired dejectedly, seating himself at the table.

"Clam broth?" asked our male parent. "What's the matter?" he added, turning to me. "Was he dead drunk last night?"

"Oh, I wouldn't say dead drunk," I replied, "although I believe they raised an aspirin tablet to his memory." C. F. didn't seem to consider this an adequate sisterly defense on my part, so he came across with a hot one.

"How about that exhibition dance you pulled on the veranda?" he wanted to know. "You showed everything you had, including your imagination. Sweet stockings, did you shake a leg!"

"Is this so?" demanded Mother. "Was she dancing again? Oh, this is unbearable! Natacha, I wont have it!"

"Mother isn't having any," I explained to Father, who was looking daggers. "Of course I danced—why not, since my legs are nothing to be ashamed of? I haven't got housemaid's knee, or anything. Just let me show you!"

I got up, ducky, and showed them a new step, but it didn't get much of a hand, except the one Dad held up to stop me with a sort of traffic-cop gesture.

the one Dad held up to stop me with a sort of traffic-cop gesture.

"That's enough!" said he angrily. Then he turned on C. F. again. "And you encourage your sister doing that sort of thing in public!" he said bitterly. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, my son! Now, when I was a boy, we were taught to protect our womenkind, and to look after them. At your age, if I'd taken my sister to a party, I'd have stayed sober and brought her home at a proper hour. In fact, when I was a boy I didn't drink, because if I had, no nice girl would have gone out with me. Do you realize that when Lincoln was your age, he was a successful lawyer?"

"And when he was your age, sir," said C. F., "he was President of the United States! Look here, Dad, I'm pretty weak this morning, but I've still got strength enough to defend my rights! I know you kick at everything I do. But is it really my fault that I act the way I do? Why wont you let me have that garage and go to work? I've told you twenty times that if you'd let me buy a half interest with Grady and go in there like I want to, it would keep me out of mischief!"

Which, Rosamond darling, was a very long speech for C. F. The garage which young Grady ran down at the west end of town was the only thing on earth that could induce my brother into exercising his vocabulary to such an extent. Because C. F. adored cars. When a motor ignored the earnest entreaties of the best professional mechanics, all C. F. apparently had to do was whistle to the darn' car, and it would follow him right out of the garage.

But Dad couldn't see the garage-racket. He wanted C. F. to be a lawyer, and probably a Senator before he got through; he refused flatly to finance the garage, and as a result, they had for the moment compromised on C. F.'s doing nothing, except give Dad something to pick on! Poor C. F. honestly preferred working with his hands, just as all I really wanted in life was a little home with the old hot I had picked out of the mob for myself. But our parents could not understand it. Dad kept telling C. F. how in his day boys wanted to go up in the world, not down in it; and as for Mother, well, you know, yourself, dear, how difficult most mothers are! Apparently nothing I could do ever stacked up well against the way Mother used to do it; and, my dear, it was the Margers' visit, as I started to tell you, that brought matters to a head.

By the way, darling, do you realize who the Margers are? Of course not! Well, dearest, Mr. Joseph K. Marger is one of the financial Houdinis of the country. I understand that he's rich principally because he can get out of anything. And Dad had a very important deal on with him. They were planning, at least Dad was, a merger of some k i n d — which, if it went through, would make mere pocket-money out of our millions; and naturally Dad was very anxious about it. In order to make a big hit with his proposed partner, Mother was planning a tremendous bust in their honor. If all went well, the signatures would go on the dotted line in due course, but a lot depended on how this visit went off, because it was a case of renewing old friendships. It seems that Mr. and Mrs. Marger had known Dad and Mother very well about twenty years ago, back in Rockville, Illinois, where they all hailed from. They used to attend the same church socials and all that sort of thing—made hay while the same sun shone, and agonized in the identical choir. The Margers had been growing fashionable in Chicago and Europe while we had become ducky on Long Island, but we were all on the crest of the permanent wave nowadays.

Unfortunately Mother and Dad couldn't very well shoot us children and get rid of the bodies before the Margers saw us, and so we were given our instructions about being on our good behavior. We were to mind our P's and Q's, and especially our D's. And as usual Mother did not neglect to mention the kind of behavior that had been expected of her when she was a girl, and her mother entertained! When C. F. and I were finally left alone in the dining-room, and C. F. was able to get hold of a very necessary hair of the dog, my big idea, which had been slowly growing while listening to Mother, came of age.

"Doesn't sound exactly like a church-picnic, this week-end our dear old folks have planned, does it?" asked C. F., grappling his black coffee like a man.

"Sweet stockings, I should say not!" *(Please turn to page 150)*

Surya looked up; she recognized the arrogant stranger who had stared at her on the evening before.

COME BACK TO ME SOON

by Achmed Abdullah

Illustrated by Arthur E. Becher

IT was years later, after he had loved her and left her as—may Allah forgive him!—he had loved and left so many women, that Mehmet the Red would speak of Nurmahal, turning her name upon his palate like a sweet. On a winter's night, sitting cozy and warm in some wayside tavern, swapping a deal of lies with other Afghans, he would say with a sigh:

"This handsome, ruddy beard of mine is tinged with gray. My eyes no longer quest like an eagle's, and my hand is more skilled today at carving a juicy joint of mutton than at slitting an enemy's throat. But once I was young. Once I was the pick of the lads in the free lands, with ever my sword eager for a bit of strife, ever a fine thirst tickling my gullet, ever the bold eyes of me giving the quirk and wink at the passing women, and they—the darlings!—giving this same quirk and wink straight back at me. And—strong? Ah, by the honor of the salt which I eat, I was as strong as an elephant in mating time!"

He would smile reminiscently, would continue:

Mehmet the untamed interrupts adventure for love - - - and finds it more perilous

"Strong—yes! But weaker than a sparrow before that lithe slip of a Rajput girl. For never, in all Allah's seven worlds, lived there one to equal Nurmahal—not even the princess in Islam of whom I shall tell you presently. *Wah*—God's mercy!—how exquisite her beauty! *Wah*—God's glory!—how steely her courage! And her hair like waves of ebony rolling over the snow of her forehead! And her tiny ears like sesamum flowers! And in her eyes the gray mellowing that gives the notion to a man to look, and look again—and never to look away! I stole her from a great Indian rajah. From under his very nose I stole her—his swollen, indecent, ungainly nose. *Hai!*—round and round the cold world, where was there the like of me in those days?"

And then the full, rich tale, the wondrous ending.

Yet the beginning was simple enough, no more nor less than Mehmet, who had come to Delhi, the Grand Moghul's capital, in the retinue of an Afghan noble sent there on a diplomatic mission, finding himself one evening strolling about in search of adventure, walking along with a strut and a swagger, trailing his long, braggart sword.

He kept on his careless way, skirting the edge of a cemetery where the graves dreamed of Judgment Day with their cluttered, brittle stone emblems; on beneath a vaulted sky, purple, silver-dusted, and the moon booming on the horizon with a golden, staccato, wedge-like gesture; on through a spider's web of alleys teeming with a riotous, fantastic, lawless motley of Oriental life.

Dark, shadow-blotched alleys, yet with sudden, brutish stammerings and flickerings of light that showed sights which a man would rather not see. Alleys like a grotesque, incredible setting for a grotesque, incredible melodrama.

Dirt and splendor! Foul rags and shimmering brocades! Scent of musk and scent of sweat!

And—color! Color of blood, color of gold, color of passion, color of pestilence—and, as Mehmet turned into a more brightly lit square, color of romance!

For a woman came tripping along, her face beneath the thin veil of a clear gold, her curly hair almost as red as Mehmet's. She was preceded by a tall captain, waving a naked sword recklessly from left to right and from right to left, and announcing loudly:

"Give way, O Moslems! Here comes a princess in Islam!"

At once the people cleared a path. They salaamed courteously, while the woman bowed her thanks; then stopped and blushed angrily, as she saw a man—ruddy-bearded, broad-shouldered, fur-capped, handsome enough to go on with as the saying has it—and

She had been about to plunge the dagger into her breast when an enemy troop

not salaaming as did the others, but standing erect, frankly staring at her.

She was about to give orders— "Tie up this man! Seventy-seven strokes on the soles of his feet to teach him better behavior!" But her indignation did not last long. The very next moment she told herself that she was not angry at all; was, in fact, rather pleased. And she smiled as she heard the captain making rumbling complaints that these were the manners of bad Moslems, of swine-fed heretics and similar base-born cattle, to ogle a woman on the street—chiefly considering that this one was a princess in Islam.

"On your knees, O father of seventeen dogs," he exclaimed, "and make proper salaams!"

Mehmet approached; and there was something in the swing of his hips which showed that more to his taste was the wolf- and deer-trail than a stepping on silken rugs. Three times he salaamed.

"I bow to you, not because you are a princess in Islam—Allah, there are so many princesses in Islam!—but because your feet are so exceedingly small. Upon my honor, the smallest feet I have ever seen," he said, in a clear, ringing voice.

He jumped sidewise just as the captain's blade swished at his throat, narrowly missing it, and disappeared in the crowd. Nor did they hinder his escape. Men of Delhi they were, turbulent and lawless, and here was a man after their own hearts—reckless and bold and arrogant. So they roared with laughter; and Mehmet laughed too, as he turned a corner on a run, a second, a third, then slowed down.

Ah, he thought, a delightful little princess! He must find out her name, must see her again. . . . .

It was growing late. But he kept on his random way, through a tortuous maze of alleys; and the wind there howled like a starved wolf; and the blackness there was blacker than ink. So black it was—with no street lamps and the moon hidden behind clouds and the windows tightly shuttered—that he could see neither house nor man nor beast. Yet life was everywhere, febrile, teeming, and Mehmet was maddeningly aware of eyes staring at him out of the darkness, used to that same darkness; heard whispering voices, bare feet pattering away on mysterious errands, the shiver of garments brushing past, a woman's reedy laugh, a faint clanking of jewelry and crackling of steel—and once, peaking out

trooper plucked her from amidst the horses' trampling feet.

of that swathing void, a cry: a cry of infinite despair—then a heavy thud, a rattling, agonized gurgle as if deep from a man's slashed throat—then silence.

No sign anywhere. No threatening shadow looming black through the black, gliding away. No twinkle of killing dagger stabbing the opaque. No actual, physical sight to motivate, to explain.

Just the cry, the thud, the death-gurgle—the silence. . . . . And suddenly Mehmet's gay mood changed, and he gave a shudder.

Afraid—was he?

Yes, he told himself honestly, he was afraid—he who had often declared, nor boastingly since it was the truth, that the hardest way to face an enemy was the handsomest, and that the more enemies to face—aye, ten to his lonely!—the greater the glory. Yet now he was conscious of rushing, clogging fear—fear not of the body, but of the soul. . . . . Perhaps because he was an Afghan, bred to the free hills, the frank, golden sun—and not to this creeping night of darkness.

Ah, darkness here, everywhere, coiling, evil. . . . . And he snapped his fingers rapidly to guard against the wiles of Shaitan the Devil, the Stones; and seeing a light gleaming in the west, he went there hurriedly—came out, a few minutes later, on a narrow lane, lit by a single lantern on a pole, and sealed at the farther end by a palace that rose into the purple welter with a jungle of twisted, bulbous domes and lance-sharp spires.

Nobody was about. No sound, except a slow wind rustling the stiff palm fronds in an invisible garden and, once, the whirring of a vulture's wings. No light in the palace. The windows black and unfriendly. Only the dim lemon glow of the street-lamp, and presently the moon coming from behind the clouds with silver and elfin green.

He walked down the lane. There was, jutting into it, a stout, curved wall, about twelve feet high. It supported a flat roof with a balustrade of fretted marble, while, back of it, the main building towered extravagantly.

A nobleman's palace, thought Mehmet—thought also that in there would be rich loot; and—for that was the way of him—his nostrils quivered greedily and his fingers twitched. But he reconsidered. Doubtless the place was well guarded; and the Grand Moghul of Hindustan—bless him not, *(Please turn to page 140)*

Suddenly there's a swish and I'm sent rolling on my back into the dust.

A LADY ASKED IT

by Sam Hellman

Illustrated by Tony Sarg

I'M squatting in training quarters singing the Prospect Blues with Red Heffernan, the football coach, when in ambles Slats Swasey, the graduate manager, and pours his two hundred and fifty net over a stool. That baby has to sit to see his feet.

"Would you be interested," he inquires, "in a forward-passer who can blacken the eye of a gnat at forty yards?"

"Yeh," grunts Heffernan. "What's the answer—so would you? Anyway, I don't want him. A sharpshooter like that'd compel me to teach some suet-finger around here to catch the ball; and work, I find, cuts into my time. What else's on your mind?"

"I'm serious," says Swasey. "The lad I'm telling you about heaves 'em so accurately it hurts. He—"

"Where," I interrupts, "did you see him play?"

"I didn't see him play," returns Slats. "He was in a field pitching melons into a wagon when I got my load of him."

"Melons, eh?" remarks Red. "What do you think they carry around the left end nowadays—cantaloupes or honey-dews?"

"Be your bean!" snorts Swasey. "What's the difference what he was throwing, so long as it was of the same general size, shape and heft as a football? It's the subject, not the object, that counts in this case."

"Even so," shrugs the coach, "there's some mileage between tossing over-size fruit into a wide-open wagon, and snapping pigskins into the lunch-hooks of a running rah-rah."

"Some, perhaps," admits Slats, "but this apple-knocker wasn't merely tossing 'em into a wagon. He was shooting 'em at all distances and from every angle into the mitts of his old man. Of course, nobody was busting through the line to drop him, but the wagon was on the move a great deal of the time."

"How long," I horns in, "did you watch this bozo?"

"Off and on for several days," replies Swasey. "I spent my vacation down in the Rocky Ford country, just across the road from the Flinger place."

"Flinger?" repeats Heffernan. "That the boy's name, or—"

"It happens that it is," says the grad manager. "Cole Flinger. I've known of the family for years."

"If the kid wowed you so," observes Red, "why didn't you have him wrapped up and delivered?"

"To tell the truth," answers Slats, "I didn't think of Flinger in connection with football until I got back here. Better have him looked into, Red. He's a young husky of nineteen or so, and built from the ground up like a silo. You can use him even if—"

"Use him!" growls Heffernan. "Right now I could use a whole squad of girl scouts from Camp Anemia. Never have these aged eyes seen such a hopeless and helpless bunch of bunglers as Bolton's turning out this season. There isn't enough punch in 'em to perforate a wet newspaper. However, I got no time to go rounding up this melon matador of yours."

"Neither have I," says Swasey; "but he's too good a gamble to pass up. How about sending Mike down on the trick?"

"Me!" I exclaims. "I'm busier than either of you. Anyhow, I'm just a trainer, not a—"

"A 'not a' you'll surely be," cuts in Slats grimly, "unless the team makes a showing this year. And that goes for Red and me too. The boys and girls are getting quite dejected over being dejected, and it's no distance at all from dejection to ejection. The finger of hope points to Flinger. I've a hunch he's the rescuer Sister Anna saw coming down the dusty road."

"Sister who?" I inquires.

"Never mind," says Swasey. "Your job's to go to Rocky Ford and let Cole show you his stuff—"

"But, my gosh," I protests, "they're not pitching melons around down there at this time of the year, are they?"

"Probably not," returns Slats, "but that's of no importance. You're to take a football along and give him a work-out."

"What," I wants to know, "am I supposed to do if this Flinger bimbo comes up to his billing? Clip him one behind the ear, run a dolly under him and tow him back here?"

"No, indeed," says Swasey. "Should the young man realize your fondest expectations—"

"Fondest expectations, your Sister Anna!" snaps Heffernan. "Bring him along if he's got one good leg and no communicable diseases. We can use anybody with a strong back and a weak mind."

"Should the young man gladden your heart," resumes Slats, "you are to proceed to inculcate in him a yearning for the higher education such as is bountifully lavished on thirsting youth by Bolton U."

"Oh, I see," says I. "The kid wants to go to college, but you want me to talk him into—"

"My private opinion," interjects the manager, "is that Cole's thinking about as much of going to college as he is of becomin

his father's deceased grandmother. Local gossip has it that he was rescued from a burning kindergarten and never again went back to school."

"I'm damned," I gasps. "Don't you even have to be able to read print to get into Bolton?"

"I believe there is some general requirement to that effect," replies Swasey, carelessly, "but that's no cordwood for you to cut. Leave the matter of Flinger's matriculation to those who have fewer but better brains. Your responsibility ends when you have pictured the allure of campus life, with all expenses paid, in such persuasive tints that Cole'll forthwith drop his melons or his mattock, as the case may be, and hie him hither."

"I'm a swell egg to sell that kind of hoopla," I mutters. "Who's going to look after the bruises and busted bones while I'm gone?"

"Nobody," says Heffernan. "Anybody we lose during your absence'll be just so much velvet." . . . .

Loaded down with instructions and a can of negotiable bait, I departs that evening to fish for Mr. Flinger. The next morning I'm in the meloneer's home town and pounding the dirt toward the old man's farm. I've no trouble finding it or the heir to its mortgages.

Cole turns out to be the silo-built baby described by Swasey. He's a six-foot two-hundred-pounder with arms long enough to interfere with his knees when he's walking, and hands you could lose a ham in. If there ever was a football prospect in the raw, this bird's those.

I introduces myself as a big shot from Bolton University and goes right into the routine we'd prepared, lyrics by Slats Swasey, music by me.

"Our cow college," I begins, "is all steamed up at the moment over improving the melon crop in this district, and—"

"Nobody aint goin' to stick their noses in and improve nothin' aroun' here," scowls old man Flinger. "I don't hold by no improvements."

"That's the spirit," says I heartily; "but you got me wrong, neighbor. The college doesn't want to improve you—it wants you to improve it. We figure your cantaloupes are the best produced in the State—"

"You didn't have to go to no trouble to figure that," grumbles the hay-tosser, thawing some. "They are. When they raise better cantaloupes than mine, they'll be watermelons."

"Or eucalyptus trees," I suggests laughingly. "Well, here's the idea: Bolton wants your son to spend a few months this fall at the school just to mingle with the other growers' boys and drop a few ideas on cantaloupe-culture here and there. We'll gladly pay all his expenses—"

"I don't want to go to no school," growls the big oaf.

"You'll like it," I assures him. "Nothing to do, lots of sport, plenty of pretty gals. A bright lad like you ought to get off the farm occasionally just to hear the lions roar. As a man of the world, don't you think so, Mr. Flinger?"

"I reckon it wouldn't do Cole no harm to get with them perfessers and learn 'em things about raisin' 'lopes," he returns, "but I need him here. We're short-handed—"

"I'm glad you brought that up," says I. "I'm authorized by the college to advance you enough money to cover the hire of a man while Cole's away. Does that fix everything, or does it?"

"Don't I have to do nothin'," inquires Cole, "exceptin' sort of loaf aroun' with the fellers? Aint there no readin' or spellin'—"

"Nothing," I answers. "Of course, they'll probably expect a husky like you to take part in athletics—games. Ever play football?"

"Naw," grunts the yokel. "What's it like?"

"Just like tossing melons into a wagon," I informs him. "I was gassing with a guy down in the village before I come out here, and he tells me you're a wonder at that."

"There be some worser'n me," he confesses. "I allus get 'em straight in your hands, don't I, Pop?"

"Yeh," drawls the old gent, "but it took a passel of saplin's to set your aim up. You used to break a right smart of melons afore—"

"Well," says I, "if you can heave a melon, you can heave a football. That's all there is to the game—throwing from one to another. By the way, I got a football in my grip here. Sort of like to kick it around between trains. Care to see it?"

Cole manifests no curiosity whatever, but I pulls the pigskin out and passes it over to him. He fingers the oval a bit and then closes his paw over the pill, leaving little but the lacing visible.

"Think you could shoot that at a mark?" I asks.

"Sure," says he, promptly. "See that tree over there?" And he lets go at a cottonwood some thirty or thirty-five yards away. *Blam!* The ball slaps flush into the gnarled trunk, and on the rebound, comes halfway back to us. "I'd have hit the knot-hole I was aimin' for," mutters Cole, apologetically, "if I'd been throwin' a melon, but the wind carries a light doodad like this."

"Show me some more," I urges.

And the kid does—plenty plus. Once he gets the feel and heft of the football, there's nothing of reasonable size within forty yards that he can't pink with the skin of the pig. He not only grooves 'em down the alley, but there's a force behind the heaves that spells murder and mayhem to such reckless souls as would attempt to block one of 'em prematurely.

"Now, listen," says I. "I'm going out there by the cottonwood and start running to the left. See if you can plank a pitch into my hands on the fly."

"Kin you catch?" asks the youngster.

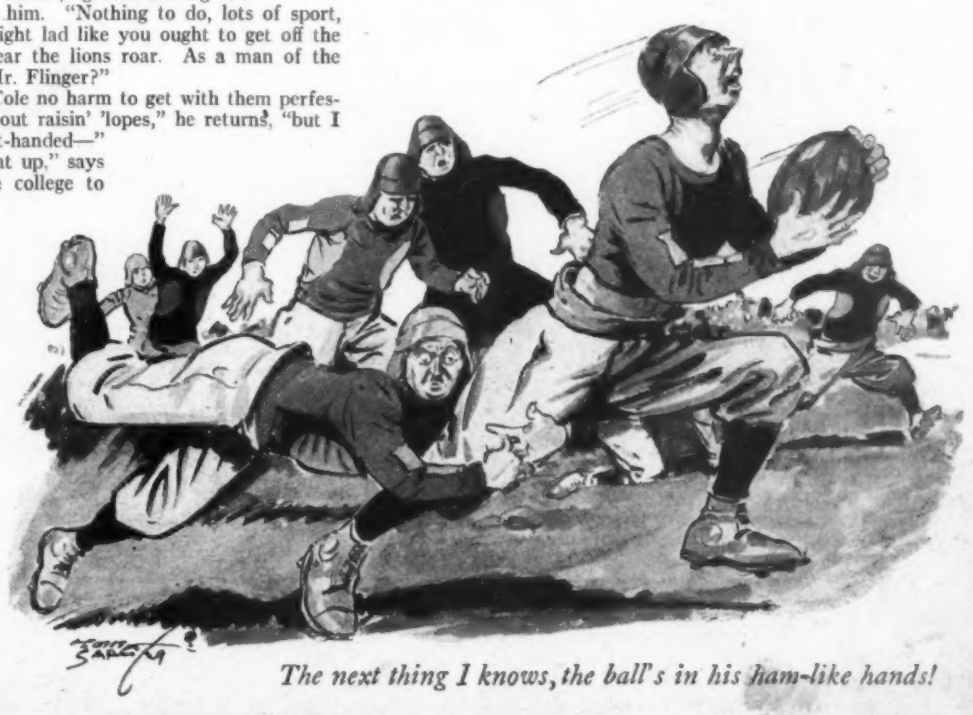
"Anything from measles to the eight-fifteen," says I. "When I raise my hand, let 'er go and try to head me off."

I starts from the tree at full tilt. Twenty feet or so beyond it I lifts a mitt and slackens my pace a bit. Suddenly there's a swish and I pivots for the catch. I'm a trifle late and a trifle unable. The ball rips through my fingers, massages me over the ear, and I'm sent rolling on my back into the dust of the Flingers' back forty. Cole helps me to my dazed dogs.

"Gosh," I mumbles, "I'm glad it wasn't a cantaloupe."

I rests awhile and then has the boy hurl a few more at my moving figure. He's there nine ways from the ace of spades. If I'd been any good myself, I could have caught all his throws in a peach-basket, standing on my head.

"You're the real McCoy, feller," says I at length, "and you'll



The next thing I knows, the ball's in his ham-like hands!

have a picnic at college. The gals there go soapy over football-players."

I spends the night at the Flingers', pays over three months' farm-hand hire to the old man, and in the morning departs with his son and heir. That evening I checks the kid at my boarding-house in Bolton and hunts up Swasey.

"He's here," says I briefly.

"Come up to the billing?" asks Slats.

"And the cooing," I returns. "Cole's the cats any way you take him; but how you're going to get him into this sink of scholarship is beyond this arnica adept. The cantaloupes he raises run more brains to the cubic inch than young Flinger does."

"Don't worry," advises Swasey. "You've delivered the grapes; it's up to me to turn 'em into raisins."

Two days later, through some pocus-hocus never made clear to me, Flinger's enrolled as a special student in horticulture, and that same afternoon he appears in training quarters to be laid out in football frills. It takes some laying to pull the trick, too—the big bambino's feet coming in the cruiser class, and his shoulders in the division of plants and structures.

"Well, my little one," I remarks during the valeting, "how do you like these classic shades as far as you've basked under 'em?"

"There be places worser'n this," he returns. "I reckon learnin's not so bad as most folks make out."

"No, indeed," says I. "A college man, you'll find, can always get ten dimes for a dollar."

"Can't everybody?" inquires Cole with native shrewdness.

"Only when they have the breaks," I tells him. "Getting anything out of the classes you're in?"

"Not yet," comes back the silo-stuffer with a smirk, "but a little girl with yeller hair looked kind of funny at me this morning. Maybe when she sees me all fixed up like this—"

"It's a cinch in a graveyard," I assures him, "but don't sell yourself down the river cheap and grab the first flap that gives you the office. After you've been in action a week or so, the frills'll be standing in a long line and galoshes to file applications for you."

"Yeh?" exclaims Flinger eagerly.

"And how yeh!" says I. "Take the case of Virgil McGillicuddy, for example: The football hero here last year, he practically had to be driven to classes in a tank on account of the way the gigglers went for him. Virgil was dropped from college when all the bees died."

"Bees!" gurgles Cole. "What bees?"

"McGillicuddy," I explains, "was a farm boy like you and specialized in bee-culture. When the bob-hairs went all bologny over him, they quit their courses—Latin, Greek, clay-modeling, piccolo-polishing, salad-dressing and the rest—and crowded into the bee class. By December there was nothing but slow music in the hives. The last of the bees had passed on. A bee-doctor said they'd been mothered to death. The Society for the Prevention of Brutality to Bees made a fuss, and of course Virgil had to pack up his other shirt and go."

"That was a break for him," remarks Flinger, "now that I'm here."

"And a break for the college too," says I. "After all, you can't kill cantaloupes with kindness."

"For crying outside the cathedral!" yelps Heffernan, who's drifted in and gotten part of the conversation, "what's all this sheep-dip about? Come on." And he leads Cole off to the playing field.

I follows for a look-see at the boy's first out, wondering what effect a change of scene and weapon's likely to have on his sharp-shooting. They haven't any. The hick throws the ball gosh-awful distances all over the lot, and with an accuracy that even pops the coach's eyes. The fact that the Bolton receivers juggle the shots as if they were hot pokers is nothing against Flinger's taste in dining-room wall-paper.

"Some control, eh?" I observes to Red.

"Yeh, and some whip," he agrees, "but he may

"He was shooting 'em at all distances and from every angle into the mitts of his old man."

not be so hot and handsome when there's a battle royal going on around his toes. They all look good on the practice lot."

"If I were you," says I, "I wouldn't have him practice much out in the open. I'm not trying to cut in on your chore, but why not keep Cole under cover for the present and spring him when, as and if the issue calls for it?"

"Nope," comes back the coach. "If we don't get him used to mix-ups, he'll just scare to death at—"

"Forget it," I interrupts. "That baby hasn't brains enough to scare. You can write your own ticket on that."

With some modifications Heffernan takes my scheme on, giving Flinger most of his work-outs behind barred doors and using him in the line at various positions when there's a chance of clockers being in the bleachers. In spite of the kid's all-American dumbness, he tumbles quickly to the idea back of the gridiron grapple; but that's not surprising—experience has taught me there's no more relation between brains and the ability to excel at sports than there is between the art of seining Arkansas River catfish and the deep melancholy prevailing in certain sections of India.

Swasey and Heffernan get all a-steam over the stuff Cole shows 'em, but the boy himself's not so happy. In a way, it's my fault. Apparently I'd overplayed my hand with the girlie gag.

"None of 'em aint payin' no attention to me," he complains. "Didn't you tell me—"

"Merely the well-known calm before the prominent storm," says I reassuringly. "Remember how deadly quiet it gets down in your country just before the rush for the cyclone-cellar? Well, that's the situation here. You got to consider, too," I goes on, "that these college molls are naturally bashful about approaching a big shot like you. John Barrymore has the same trouble."

"You mean the picture feller?" queries Flinger.

"Doubtless," I replies. "There're a million janes in this country who'd give up their coats of tan to talk to Barrymore, but they can't get up the nerve. It's tough on John, too, who's naturally sociable. I hear he's going into the talkies just to make conversation."

"Hm," grunts Cole. "I'm sociable too, and—"

"Now, don't you worry and get circles under your eyes," says I. "After the big game with Clayborne next Saturday, the chances are we'll have to call out the volunteer fire department and a couple of squadrons of light horse to protect you from the fillies. There'll probably be eight or ten of 'em battling for the privilege of cutting your meat."

Flinger departs partly satisfied, but I'm not even that satisfied. I've started something, and it's up to me to finish it before the kid gets a real grouch on. I takes my problem by the ear and leads it up to Swasey.

"Slats," says I, "we've got to start a Flinger fad among the young females of this diploma dive."

"What for?" he wants to know.

"So as to get our forward passes from a contented cow," I tells him. "When I was selling Cole my bill of bull down in Rocky Ford, my best line was the fuss the fair ones made over feetball players. The time has come when I've got to deliver the fuss."

"I see," nods Swasey. "Well, that's a short sheep and quickly shorn. I know any number of Jills here who'd break an arm in a couple of places for dear old Bolton, drink 'er down. But why the agitation? If Cole makes the kind of showing I expect him to on Saturday, the wrens'll need no artificial stimulation to go completely Flinger."

EVEN Slats couldn't have expected the kind of showing the kid does make against Clayborne. Barely a minute after the kick-off, he snaps a forward to Jed Haley, the swifty at our left end, and a six is in the bag before the enemy wots what's what. In the same quarter the put and take's duplicated for a fifty-yard gain, and two plays later Haley's again across the pay-off line, hugging a hot heave from Flinger to his bosom. A team that figures to be at least two touchdowns stronger than Bolton is already that many in the red.

"Better take him out, Chief," I suggests, "before somebody steps on his soupbone."

"Can't," says Heffernan. "I need his beef in the line."

"Maybe," I shrugs, "but you need his whip more than his weight. You know this Clayborne crew."

He knows it well enough, or ought to. Clayborne's the cut-throat school of the conference, their system being to pick on individuals giving 'em trouble until the *(Please turn to page 96)*

KING'S CREW

Four young people break all traffic rules on the royal road to romance

by Frank R. Adams

He had reached a position in back of her before she sensed his presence.

The Story So Far:

THE escapades of this high-hearted crew had already attracted newspaper notice when the big young adventurer George Porter joined them; and thereafter their careers made vivid history. Yet King wasn't really the young man's name; and his crew had consisted merely of his twin younger brother and sister Stanley and Duveen.

Their great adventure began in this wise: George Porter had that morning been given a beautiful new truck to drive; and he was seriously vexed when the hot-headed King orphans rammed it with their ancient flivver. A beautiful fight followed, in which George knocked out Stanley, and was having a grand battle with David when the police kissed themselves into the party. Whereupon George joined King's Crew in common cause against the intruding Law—until the last surviving official club knocked him cold. It was no more than fitting, therefore, that the Crew should bear the wounded George away with them as they flivvered out from under the noses of the police platoon a riot-call had summoned.

Safe at home, they were patching up the still unconscious George, when a Mrs. Tremayne called, and making no effort to hide her enthusiasm for David, carried him off to dinner.

That evening Hélène Tremayne telephoned Duveen and asked: "Is your brother David there?"

"Why, no. He's at your place, isn't he?"

"He's been here, yes, but—oh, something dreadful has happened. My husband—"

That was all. The voice died away with a curious sort of guttural sound.

Shortly afterward a police detective appeared and asked for David King. There had been a murder at the Tremayne house. But though David had evidently been home and had taken away a packed suitcase, he had left no word other than a letter authorizing Duveen to draw on the family bank-account.

Next morning Duveen read in a newspaper the known facts about the killing of Boyd Tremayne: David King had arrived as a dinner guest at the Tremayne house. Tremayne had jealously protested King's presence, and after an unpleasant scene King had left. Shortly thereafter another dinner guest, one Rudolph Einmetz, had come. Tremayne went to his wife's rooms and did not return; finally the butler and Einmetz forced a locked door and found Tremayne's body on the floor of a dressing-room; he had been stabbed to the heart with a paper-knife. Mrs. Tremayne had vanished.

Later Duveen underwent further inquisition from detectives seeking to locate David. And it was while the officers were still in the house that she heard a thump against the front door and saw a letter slipped under it. She secreted the letter as Detective Morse opened the door—and the body of a young Mexican, killed by a bamboo-handled throwing-knife, slumped into the hall.

While the detectives sought to identify the dead man, Duveen slipped away and looked at the letter—addressed in Hélène Tremayne's hand to *Mr. David King!* Duveen would not open that letter—and could not risk the detectives' finding it; she rewrapped it, addressed it to a mythical *Mrs. Kirby Smith* in care of the Torquinada Hotel, and thinking casual candor the best concealment, placed it on the hall table as if for mailing. And—Detective Morse, as he left the house, picked up that letter with a smiling offer to mail it for her. *(The story continues in detail:)*

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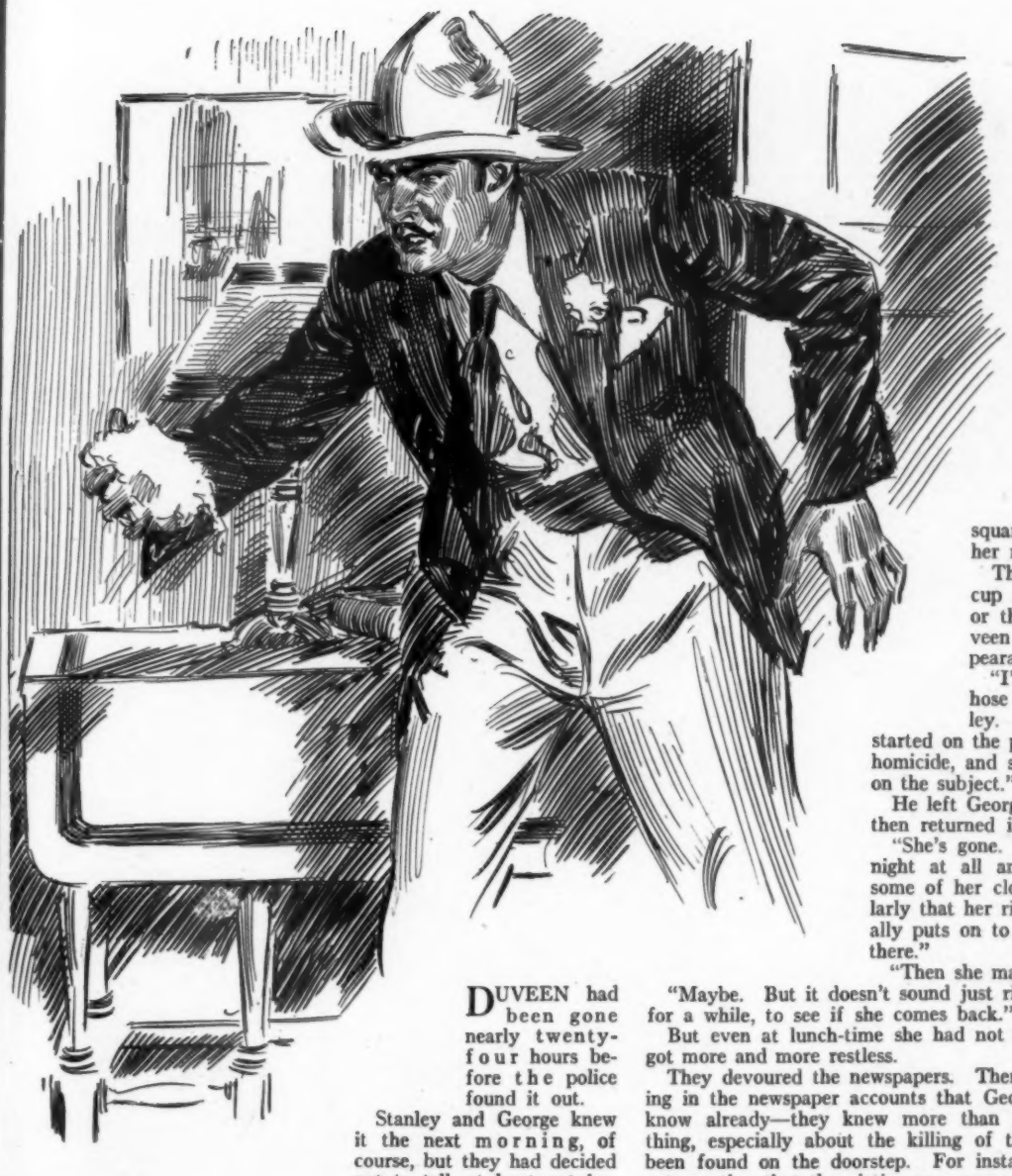


Illustrated by James Montgomery Flagg

DUVEEN had been gone nearly twenty-four hours before the police found it out.

Stanley and George knew it the next morning, of course, but they had decided not to tell, at least not immediately.

Duveen had not come down to breakfast. This was contrary to custom, because she almost never lay abed in the morning. There were too many experiences to be crowded into each day for her to waste any time in extra sleep.

George was tentatively considering the idea of going back to his job or at least finding out if he could go back, but Stanley vetoed that.

"If you don't mind, old horse, I wish you'd wait until Dub comes down. She may have some ideas that will require more strength to execute than I've got this morning. She usually has. And we'll fix up the matter of expenses—"

"Never mind that. I've got fifteen dollars saved up," George returned, "and I'd just as soon take a couple of days off as not. I was going to spend the coin on taking a dame out to the beach yesterday, but I plumb forgot. I hope she's mad."

Stanley laughed at that. "Why?"

George grinned back. "I don't really get very much steamed up over women. I don't understand 'em, but that's the only advantage I've got. The less you know the easier it is. Of course, most of the janes I know are push-overs with round heels. I never met anybody like your sister before, and—"

"You can't count her. She's more like a boy." Duveen would have treasured that tribute from her twin, who certainly would never have uttered it in her presence. "She shoots square and hits hard and takes her medicine graceful."

They had finished a second cup of coffee apiece and two or three cigarettes. Still Duveen had not put in an appearance.

"I'll go up and turn the hose on her," decided Stanley. "We'll have to get started on the preparations for our daily homicide, and she may have some ideas on the subject."

He left George for a few minutes and then returned in perplexity.

"She's gone. Didn't use her bed last night at all and seems to have taken some of her clothes. I noticed particularly that her riding outfit, that she usually puts on to start the day with, isn't there."

"Then she may have gone out riding."

"Maybe. But it doesn't sound just right. We'll wait, though, for a while, to see if she comes back."

But even at lunch-time she had not returned. The two men got more and more restless.

They devoured the newspapers. There was just exactly nothing in the newspaper accounts that George and Stanley did not know already—they knew more than the newspapers, if anything, especially about the killing of the young man who had been found on the doorstep. For instance, the newspapers did not mention that the victim was apparently a drug addict. The police must be suppressing that information for some reason or other. In general, no hints as to the distinguishing peculiarities of the stranger were given. There were no specific descriptions of his appearance or an appeal to the public to identify him, as is usually the case. That must have been by police request. Either they knew who he was already or were expecting to trap somebody by a surprise identification.

Neither George nor Stanley was able to figure that out.

More and more other considerations melted into the unimportant background as the fact of Duveen's continued absence loomed larger and larger in the picture.

There was no doubt now that she had gone for more than a temporary jaunt in the neighborhood. The servants, of course, must have discussed it, and through them it probably filtered through to Patrolman Crane, who was again on duty keeping the terrier Tightwad company in the grounds.

In the late afternoon Detective Morse dropped in.

"I want a verification or a denial of this rumor that Miss King has left the city," he stated.

Stanley judged from his manner that the detective was inclined to be annoyed. Therefore he told him in his gentlest manner, not the one he ordinarily used with the police: "I don't know where she is, Mr. Morse. I wish I did. All I can tell you

is that we have not seen her since last night. Right after supper she retired to her room, and this morning she was not there, and her bed had not been slept in."

"Might have left as early as eight or nine o'clock last evening, then?" surmised Morse.

"I should think so. Perhaps the officer who was on duty outside saw her go."

"I don't think so. I'll ask him when he comes on, which will be in the course of an hour or so, when the local precinct changes shifts. But he was not instructed to keep any special eye on the doings of the inmates of this house. His orders were merely to prevent you from being annoyed by curiosity-seekers. Besides, I have an idea that your sister took particular pains not to meet him when she left."

"Unless she was abducted," George pointed out.

"In that case the abductors would be especially careful not to be seen." Morse reflected for a moment. "Besides, I don't believe, any more than you do, that your little sister was abducted. It would be easier to kidnap a Lithuanian wildcat. I've got to admit, though, that it is strange that every time a man gets killed around here, a woman immediately disappears."

"Deuced annoying to the census bureau," agreed Stanley, "and a positive blow to the Bigger and Better Los Angeles Association."

Morse regarded the young man with hard suspicion. "Are you anxious to have your sister found, or not?"

"I want to have her found, of course," Stanley assured him contritely. "If my manner of speech sounds flippant, put it down to the instinctive irreverence of the younger generation. What I mean is that I'm a darn' sight more anxious than anyone else in the world to have the King family safe and sound under this roof. If we can't get 'em back, I want to be with 'em somewhere else, even if it's on the top floor of a burning sky-scraper. Do you think I like being left behind here holding an empty sack and trying to answer the dodo questions of the Police Department?"

Detective Morse looked at him with more respect even if with decreasing affection. "All right, that's what I want to know. If you're going to help, I'll let you stay out of jail."

"Have you got a line on the other one—on Mrs. Tremayne, I mean?" asked Stanley.

"No, but I've sent a man to Torquinada Beach." Morse watched Stanley like a cat as he made that remark.

But Stanley seemed not to be especially startled. "That's a pleasant place for a week-end jaunt. Did you give him enough money to play the races at Tia Juana?"

Morse did not answer, but only looked sour.

"My mistake, Mr. Morse," Stanley apologized hastily. "I didn't mean to wise-crack about it. That's what I go to the Beach for, myself—to bet on the wicked little ponies over in Mexico."

"There's a revolution going on down there."

"Oh, yes. I'd forgotten. Then this Johnny of yours went to Torquinada for something else, what?"

"Don't you know?"

"No, but I didn't think I was supposed to."

Morse was apparently satisfied that his arrow shot into the air had not hit a target. He departed with the final admonition that if Duveen came home or communicated with them in any way they were to notify him at once.

After he was gone, the two young men smoked endless cigarettes.

"What did he mean about Torquinada?" Stanley asked of the atmosphere for the hundredth time. "He thought I was going to know something about it, but I didn't. That would mean that I would know if the kid had told me all that she was wise to."

"How would it be if one of us was to go to the beach," suggested George, "and look into this."

"It's a good idea, but I don't think I ought to leave here—in case either Dave or Duveen should telephone or wire for anything."

"How about me?" George asked.

"You've got no business wasting any more time over our troubles," Stanley argued. "You've got into a devil of a mess as it is, lost your job and everything, just through the King family's propensity to be in the middle of anything that happens."

"Then you didn't mean anything by letting me part way into the Crew yesterday?"

"Sure, I kind of meant it; but I didn't figure on your devoting your life to it. You might have to, if you trail with us."

"That's what I meant," George declared.

He looked just like the terrier Tightwad—around the eyes, anyway.

There are animals, and people too, who live only to the extent of their devotion to some one or something. Sometimes it's only a flag, or a railroad company, or a brass badge with *"Fire De-*

George did it very simply with a bear-like hug.

partment" or *"Police Department"* embossed on it. You look at them with your modern, cynical, *x*-ray eyes, and your impulse is to say: "Don't be like that. The flag may fade, or the president of the company may be a crook, or the woman or man you serve may die."

But it wouldn't do any good to tell them that. You can't drive that heart-breaking trustful look out of a dog's eyes. After a rifle-shot, even, he'll tell you it's O. K., and lick your hand during that dreadful last second.

It's wrong for a dog to feel that way; and for a human being, especially since the Emancipation Proclamation, it is actually illegal. Still, no one can stop it; and some of us—and we'll pay for that later—actually make use of devotion like that to our own considerable advantage.

George Porter himself had not known he was built that way at all, but as soon as the star rose on his horizon, he altered his course and made for it with a fixity of purpose and devotion that made all his previous life mere gymnasium work.

George's proposition was finally accepted by Stanley.

George wanted to go over to his boarding-house to get his other suit of clothes, so it was arranged that he would not leave until the next morning. By that time, an item of news in the morning paper reinforced them in their decision. The item, telegraphed from San Diego, was to the effect that Mrs. Hélène Tremayne was registered at the Hotel Torquinada. It had been sent in by the International Press reporter as merely a social note. But the Los Angeles city editors had applied the microscope of their knowledge of local events and had played it up as a matter of significance with reference to the recent murder of Mr. Tremayne.

"It sounds phony to me," declared Stanley, as he saw George off at the train, "but look into it, anyway."

Probably no other adventurer ever set out on such a pilgrimage with so little money in his pocket. By the time George had paid his fare to San Diego, his fifteen-dollar fortune was as full of holes as a chicken-fence. Still, he had his youth and his strength, both of which had never failed him as yet.

On the long ride George discovered that his potentialities were not fading any. Three different susceptible damsels managed to engage him in conversation, and he gathered that his future attentions would not be in the least rebuffed. But George did not take a single telephone number. He was rather dazed, himself, to find out how different a fellow he was from the George Porter of the day before yesterday.

Chapter Ten

THE desk-clerk at the hotel who was on duty Tuesday afternoon, got slightly impatient at the number of masculine telephone calls and inquiries in person as to the whereabouts of Mrs. Hélène Tremayne. The parties calling always insisted upon talking to him or to the manager, and naturally the manager passed the buck every time to his subordinate. One of the men—it was he who came to the desk in person—said that he had been sent

by the Los Angeles Police Department. The clerk had no reason to doubt his credentials, but he could give him no information further than that which he had previously imparted over the telephone to the others.

"Mrs. Tremayne registered here yesterday," he said, consulting the register in order to get the exact time, "but no one paid any particular attention to her, outside of giving her our ordinary efficient service. Today when people began calling up about her, we discovered that, although her bed was slept in last night, the maid had not seen her today. She may or she may not be in the neighborhood. She has been paged in the hotel and in the gardens but does not answer. Now, if you can suggest anything yourself that we can do, I am sure that the manager will be glad to put the entire facilities of the hotel at your service."

The police officer asked to be shown the room, and he examined the baggage perfunctorily. It was locked.

"If this dame doesn't show up by tomorrow, we'll open her grips. In the meantime, I'll just wait around." . . . .

A young man up in San Francisco had seen the item about Mrs. Tremayne, and almost immediately thereafter sought passage via the Maddux Airways, Inc., for San Diego.

When the machine landed at the airport in the latter city, he did not hasten particularly about getting out. In fact, he hung back a little to look over the few people who were there to greet passengers. Almost everyone had started away when he finally climbed out.

He stood looking off toward the edge of the field where the offices were, and where cars were parked, so he did not see the person who approached him from the rear.

"Hello, murderer," said a well-remembered voice.

He did not turn. "Hello, kid. I wasn't expecting to meet you here."

"No? I go most everywhere. Aren't you kind of glad to see me, or wont you be when you look?"

He brought his gaze from the distant and disappearing crowd around to her.

"Of course I'm glad to see you, kid, but I wasn't just expecting it. Where's Hélène?"

"That's the question."

"Isn't she here?"

"Not that I know of."

"But the papers this morning said—"

"Oh, I put that item in myself, or at least I allowed the newspaper reporters to infer that she was here. I registered under her name."

"But what for?"

"Because I knew it was the best way to get in touch with you. I felt pretty sure that if you thought she was anywhere in particular, you'd immediately head for that spot. So I sent up the rocket with her name on it, because I had to reach you some way. Follow me. I've got a car parked over here not so close to the office. There's no use standing around here advertising ourselves to the police, local knife-throwers, real-estate agents and other inhabitants who are apt to resort to violence and lethal weapons. How did you enjoy your trip to San Francisco?"

"Not much."

"I don't suppose you expected to. Did I tell you that you didn't fool the police any? There's an awful wise pie-faced sort of man on the case—Horace Morse, if you've never met him. Iron mask concealing a heart of gold. Not a bad sort after you get to know him. But he thinks of things you might do, just a little before you do 'em. I'd really feel easier if I knew where he was right now."

"Never mind that for a moment. Now that you've got me down here, tell me everything that has happened."

"Not until we get under cover. Somebody might recognize

He discovered that his potentialities were not fading away.

you out here—especially if they happened to be looking for you. But I've got a room over at the hotel—"

"Under Hélène's name?" David interrupted hastily.

"No. I've got another one besides that. I registered twice, once as a blonde and once as a brunette. When I came in as Hélène, I tried to be beautiful—considerable success, too, if you ask the clerk; and then later I made an unobtrusive entrance as is, and got a little room near the ocean-side entrance where I can go in and out without crossing the lobby."

"Under your own name?"

"No. I'm Mrs. Kirby Smith from Altoona, Pennsylvania, if anybody wants to send me a Christmas present."

Duveen's room was much as she had described it and could be reached through the entrance on the sea-side of the mammoth, rambling old hotel, unofficial headquarters of army and navy officers, polo teams, tennis champions and turfmen from all over the country—in short, the smartest hostelry on the Pacific Coast.

There, in the room, she told Dave of the events which had transpired since he had overheard Patrolman Crane's telephone conversation and had left the house.

He knew about the second murder, the one which had been committed on the family doorstep, but he did not know, naturally, that the young Mexican had died attempting to deliver a note from Hélène to himself.

He interrupted her when she spoke of the letter and demanded it at once, but she made him listen to the balance of the story.

"After Morse took the letter to mail it, as he said, I did the only thing I could think of to get it back and deliver it into your hands—I came here as Mrs. Kirby Smith so it would be delivered to me, and also let the papers find out that Mrs. Tremayne was here, so that you would come and I could turn it over to you. Well, you're here, but the letter hasn't arrived—yet."

"When did Morse pick it up to mail it?"

"Sunday night," replied Duveen.

"This is Tuesday. It ought to have arrived yesterday."

"Yes, unless he forgot to post it. Men sometimes do."

"Did Morse strike you as the kind of man who would forget?"

"No."

"Then the chances are that he opened it, and now he knows more about where Hélène is than we do."

"I wish now that I'd read it," Duveen regretted, "but I didn't think it was quite the right thing to do."

"No. What you did was O. K. No one would ever have guessed that Morse would see the letter and take it with him."

Dave got up and walked the floor.

"That letter was probably an appeal for help, and here I am doing nothing while she may be in desperate trouble."

Duveen regarded him anxiously. "Do you think she killed Mr. Tremayne?"

Dave brought himself up with a sharp turn. "Do you?"

"Well," Duveen defended, "she is in love with you, and he was the only thing that stood in the way."

"I care for her too, and he stood in my way also," Dave argued sarcastically, "but do you think I killed him?"

"No, no," Duveen denied hastily. "I was just thinking as a detective would. She might have done it, and it's kind of funny that she disappeared."

"It is strange, yes," Dave admitted, "but it almost entirely disproves the theory that she might have killed him. If Hélène had done a thing like that, her first impulse would be to give herself up, to admit it bravely and take the consequences."

"Do you think of her as being like that?" Duveen asked, anxiously watching his eyes as well as his lips when he replied.

"Yes," answered Dave simply, "she is like that."

Duveen sighed. "All right. Then we will have to find her and—"

She was interrupted by the telephone ringing.

Dave looked at her questioningly.

"I think I'd better answer it," Duveen replied to his unspoken query.

Into the mouthpiece she said: "Hello."

"Mrs. Kirby Smith?" some one asked.

"Yes."

"That letter you have been asking for has just arrived. Shall I send it up?"

"Oh, yes, thank you, send it up, please."

She looked at Dave. "What do *you* think? It's only a day late, and it might have been delayed by some error."

"Wait till we see it."

In a moment or so a bell-boy arrived, and Duveen unlocked the door to receive the letter while Dave stood in the bathroom. She had to get some change from her purse and asked the boy to wait a moment.

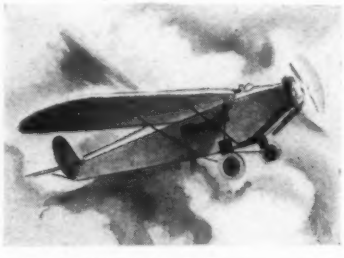
(Please turn to page 120)

WHAT IS AHEAD OF A

A question which is being asked in every real home in America; and a reply by the author of "Sorrell and Son"

WHEN one considers the effect of man's mobility upon his civilization, one is made to realize that the internal-combustion engine is the most potent and significant motive force of the day. In a sense it is the new Sphinx, an enigmatic and almost sinister creature, challenging man to read the riddle of the mechanical future.

Athens held her empire by the oars of her ships; Rome marched to power on the feet of her legionaries. The nomad's horse left older and richer civilizations trampled in the dust. The armor-clad knight gave place to the gunner and the musketeer. Columbus' sailing-ship became America. Steam conquered the wilderness.



The old gods have passed.

All this is obvious to us now, but how unobvious it was to the young men of those earlier generations! Did some Byzantine boy dream of Constantinople falling to the Turk? Could any Spaniard or Dutchman have foreseen Buenos Aires or New York?

The future is to the young—the young mind, the young body; and if we say that in this age of ours the mechanic has displaced the mystic, and that the flying chariot of Apollo is driven by a petrol engine and not drawn by wingèd horses, we are at the beginning of our problem.

Life is self-expression; and each generation must express itself in its own way and in its own language.

Take that most delightful and subtle play "Berkeley Square," in which a young man of our age has a sentimental passion for the period of the Georges and the American Revolution. In the play his dream comes true. He gets back through time to his Georgian period, and is completely disillusioned. His cry is: "These people have their feet stuck in the mud." He sees the period as gross, unclean, barbarous and cruel. He feels himself in chains. Even the Georgian girl who loves him understands his predicament, perhaps because of her youth. A man has to live with his own generation.

In Noel Coward's operetta "Bitter Sweet," the same theme is dealt with, but in another atmosphere. Here the woman of the old culture, romantic, musical, who had loved splendidly, tragically, and married a penniless musician, finds in the new jazz cocktail crowd a little horde of young aliens. And her cry is: "O you young things, you understand nothing but speed and noise."

Now, let us exclude steam and electricity, and take the gasoline engine as the significant, modern symbol. Steam—in a sense—gave movement in the mass. The gasoline engine has supplied what one might call individual mobility. Each man is his own motor.

We have had four phases of movement:

The Foot-and-Hoof Period.

The Bicycle Period.

The Automobile.

The Airplane.

I have passed through three of these periods, and shared in them, while refusing to accept the fourth, perhaps because the airplane still suggests to me the loathsome bombing-bird of the war—though I can remember watching one of the first airplane flights in France, and the ecstasy and exultation to which it stirred the crowd. I shared in that exultation. Man—the winged god—saluted us from the skies.

A reminiscent mood can be significant, especially when it is personal and human, and linked with human happenings. The foot-and-horse phase of transportation is associated with memories of my father, a busy country doctor. He walked and drove; he gave up riding because he found that it interfered with his delicacy of touch. His practice was a large one, and often I drove with him in the high dogcart in the teeth of a bitter northeast wind.

He kept three horses, one a very proud and strenuous mare who could do her forty miles, and would not tolerate a passing on the road. And nothing could pass her, if my father so pleased. In such a practice as this he might be twelve hours on the road, visiting outlying villages; and yet I have a feeling that he saw more than the modern doctor sees. He had more time to observe things, crops, birds, trees, the sky and its moods. He had more leisure to be in touch with his environment. He loved poetry and could quote it while handling his reins. I cannot imagine a man at the wheel of a fast car quoting poetry—at least, not that sort of poetry.

Now, certainly in a sense, my father was less mobile than the modern doctor in his car, but I would back him against any man of his age in a race up three flights of stairs. He was extraordinarily active, both mentally and physically. Busy doctor that he was, he had time to be a justice of the peace, a good cricketer and a first-class shot. He had leisure—or he made it—for matters that were amazingly various. He kept immense notebooks. He read. He wrote poetry. He found time to teach himself German. He could hurry and yet remain inwardly at peace. He had a quiet, beautiful, tranquil temper, and strong views which today our tired tolerance would call narrow. As a Victorian he was very much master of his environment. On sundry occasions he gave me kindly, judicial whackings, and I deserved them. I find the balance and the rhythm and the human rightness of him rather rare today, for he combined the two qualities of the craftsman and the artist.

The pneumatic-tired bicycle arrived, and I was given one by my father. He never learned to ride a machine, though I tried to teach him during one summer holiday. I can remember him plunging into the bottom of a deep ditch, and all that was visible above the grass and weeds was the top of his cap. After that he left the machine alone, and being a man of his generation, was content to walk and to drive.

I suppose the bicycle supplied me with my first experience of speed, but in a very mild form. A rush downhill, or five minutes' scorching at twenty miles an hour, satisfied the occasion. The machine gave to us a new sense of adventure. There were strange roads to be explored and conquered, new country to be seen. Often in those days we rode out in parties to distant villages or places of interest, a ruin or a church, and had tea in some cottage garden. They were very gentle and unsensational expeditions, but we went in search of certain things, and we found them.

I can remember starting off on a fifty-mile ride with a Scotch student, and directly we had cleared the town, he said to me: "Now, what shall we argue about?" I was surprised. I was content to ride and look. "Why argue?" He answered: "I always like to get up an argument on a ride, and I like it to last the whole way. What about Free Will?" But I had never been an argumentative child, and I had no wish to wrangle on Free Will and Fatalism on a summer morning. Probably he thought me a dull dog, but we were young, and my youth challenged his, and I

YOUNG MAN TODAY?

by Warwick Deeping

Decorations by George Illian

made the pace. Hard pedaling left him less talkative.

But consider the mentality of that Scotch student. He was mounted on a machine, but he was so much master of that machine that his urge was to talk metaphysics. He was a brain, a personality carried along on two wheels; but he still dominated the machine. It was a useful accessory. It had not so cramped his intelligence that it was a mere narrow slit no wider than the road along which some mechanical creature thundered.

Then came the automobile. I had married. My wife and I lived in the depths of the country. In those days she was a delicate child, unable to ride, and apt to be overtired by too much walking. I had a little money saved, and we bought our first car, a queer little contraption with a single cylinder, and sans hood or wind-screen. But what a car it was! We were like two excited babies in a glorified pram behind that little chugging engine. We went upon voyages of discovery, pilgrimages to strange places. We had a new mobility, a widened horizon. My wife has often said that nothing made so great a change in her life as that small car. It did what a machine should, saved her weariness, and allowed her spirit to travel as it has always traveled in quest of the thing she loves—beauty.

Those were peaceful days upon the road. There was no hurry, and no strained alertness. The machine might be temperamental, but it had not attained to too much strength and arrogance. Twenty-five miles an hour was fast. You could stop when and where you pleased, and sit and stare. You could be alone.

But now! We have two cars, each capable of doing sixty miles an hour, and a chauffeur. Compared to that little old vehicle they are things of luxury. As cars go, they have beauty; but I am quite sure that they never give us the pleasure we won from that glorified pram. Because the tradition of the road has changed. In the old days the road was for the wayfarer and for the beasts; now it is for the machine. It is not a pleasant highway leading to secret places, a track for the country folk; it is a concrete stage for speed.

Often I sit in a village or on the edge of a wood or heath, and marvel. Modernity rushes by. It fills the old quiet places with incessant and dreadful noise and mechanical unrest. Motor-coaches, cars, motor bicycles in endless streams, all hurrying. And to get where? To the sea, to some scheduled beauty spot, some public house? These pilgrimages are as mechanical as the machines in which they are made. Hustle is the thing. You must pass the other fellow. You must exhibit speed, and the little swagger of speed. Democracy is on the road, but not socialism. The hundred-and-fifty-pound man wants to be as good or perhaps a little better than the thousand pounder. The machine itself can be a snob.

One day I spoke to a Scotch gentleman who occupies a position of responsibility in the experimental gardens of our horticultural society. It is a place of great beauty and interest, alive with the most fascinating forms of life.

I said: "Isn't it extraordinary—all those people tearing down the main road in their machines, and hardly a soul stops to visit this garden."

He looked at me and said in his dry Scotch way:

"Per-haps it's as weel."

Now, here we have it: speed, youth at the wheel, the crowd complex in a car, thousands of cars. It is here, dominant, a reality. What does it signify? What is it going to do with us, or we with it? What is youth going to do with it, or what is it going to do to youth?

Pregnant questions. Is the young wireless fan going to spend his life listening to music that some other man has made? Is he going to make no music of his own? Is he to be nothing but a copyist, a listener-in, a mere mechanized intelligence controlling automatically an automaton created largely by machinery? Is he to be shot about the earth and across the skies like a mere nerve ganglion in the hollow of a steel shell?

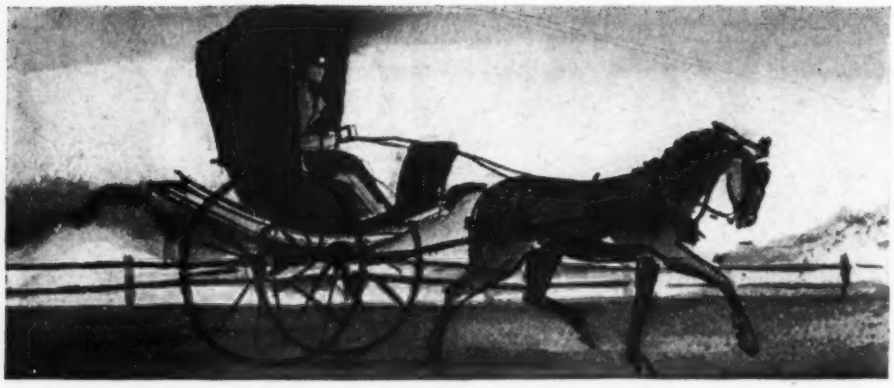
Courage. Yes, the age shows courage. I know that courage is required to drive a fast car in a road race or to handle a superplane. I respect this courage and admire it. But cannot this courage come to possess a shell of insensitiveness? It takes on the callousness of the machine. It can kill and drive on and leave a little bloody mess in the road. This happens almost daily in our civilized countries. The speed maniac kills and slinks swiftly and treacherously away.

Youth will cry, "Let me possess my soul in silence."

Up above us is the airplane, man's very last symbol, his mechanical bird, wonderful and splendid, and yet how utterly inferior when compared with a bird! Man is still but a clumsy botcher when his work is set beside that of the Unknown Artist. Rather would I regard the airplane as a promise of what may be, a beautiful and silent moth, not a horror of noise.

And now, what of Youth and the Machine? Youth is the rebel; it protests; it asks for the new, for the expression of its very self in its own generation; and never has youth been more rebel than now. Never has there been a greater breaking away from the past and its traditions. Youth cries: "I come, I see, I conquer."

Was there ever such an age, such possibilities? We



Often I drove with him in the teeth of a bitter wind.

have got rid of so much humbug, so much snobbery, so many silly illusions. The eyes of our young men are open very wide. They are young realists, pragmatists. They question everything. "Will it work? Can it travel?"

Modern youth demands results. Its self-expression seems to be in movement, and especially in rapid movement. It is objective rather than subjective. Its hero is the speed-king, the games expert, the man of big business, the super-mechanic. And to a point all this is immensely healthy. It demands courage and fitness and self-control. It is of the open air. It does not smell of the cabaret and the brothel.

Modern youth at its best strikes me as very clean, and with a wisdom of its own. It is much less sex-obsessed. It is more mature, but sometimes it appears pathetically disillusioned. We youngsters of thirty years ago could be romantic creatures, and I often wonder whether modern youth falls in love as we did, not only with women but with life. For to fall in love with life and to remain in love with it, a man must have the soul of the artist.

What does one mean by artist? Not a long-haired person, the creature of a clique, the exponent of some particular form of expressionism. The artist as I see him retains the aliveness, the sensitiveness, the curiosity of the child. He has a feeling for the mystery of things. He may be a scientist, or a gardener or a doctor or a shepherd on the downs, or a painter of pictures. He is not satisfied with one aspect of life, mere movement in a straight line. He is sensitive to all sorts of impressions, to the thing we call beauty. He has a sense of the unknown, even in himself. He is the inspired humanist, something much more than a mechanic or a mathematician, though the inspired mathematician can be the greatest of artists.

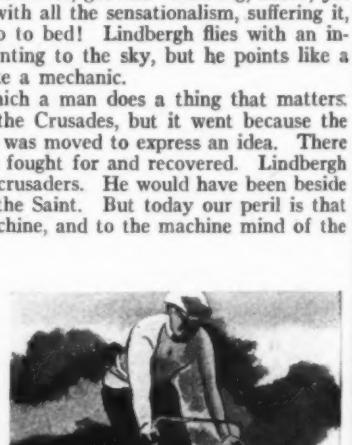
Let us take these two types, the mechanic and the artist, and for the sake of our argument contrast them vividly; for it is this contrast that challenges the youth of today. Are we to be machine men, the creatures of speed and of the cinema and the sensational press, growing as alike as the cars upon the road? Or shall we rebel against a mass production culture, and choose to color it with some of the blood of the old immortals? Shall we be mechanical men or the children of Christ?

Though may I say that I regard Henry Ford as one of the world's liberators? He has pointed a particular way. I prefer to think of Ford not so much as the maker of a machine as the preacher of "service." He has given man a machine, but also he has given him a message.

For my feeling about the problem is that the young man today has his own riddle of the Sphinx, and that is how to combine the artist and the mechanic. And the artist will have to master the mechanic. Unless this happens, all our mobility and hurry and hustle will see us nothing but mechanized slaves. Youth must cry: "I will possess my soul." For in spite of the psychologists, we all of us understand what we mean by soul. The behaviorist may argue against the existence of this invisible personality, like a child who may argue that there is no jam, because he has just eaten it.

One asks the question, "Is there any figure of the age that symbolizes the mingling of the artist and the mechanic?" and into one's field of mental vision rises the figure of Lindbergh. And what a figure! There is something of the Bayard in it, of Columbus, of Ulysses. It is wingèd youth, splendid and brave and chivalrous. It is no mere accessory attached to the machine. We think of Lindbergh the man, flying, not of the machine. I have never seen Lindbergh in the flesh, but I have seen him in films, and I loved him. He was so unlike the screen man, or the crowd man. His modesty, his naturalness, got me. This big, brave, yet humorous boy, putting up with all the sensationalism, suffering it, and probably wanting to go to bed! Lindbergh flies with an inspiration. He is youth pointing to the sky, but he points like a poet or an explorer, not like a mechanic.

For it is the spirit in which a man does a thing that matters. The coat of mail went to the Crusades, but it went because the man inside the coat of mail was moved to express an idea. There was something sacred to be fought for and recovered. Lindbergh would have understood the crusaders. He would have been beside Richard the Lion or Louis the Saint. But today our peril is that nothing is sacred to the machine, and to the machine mind of the mechanic. Some of us went to the Great War like crusaders, only to find that nothing was sacred to the shell and the bomb. Had women and children to be blown to pieces? They were blown to pieces. The man-slave behind the gun did not hesitate.



And men got used to it. They accepted the horror. Even while mouthing sensational sayings, they grew strangely callous. There was so much killing that killing seemed natural. So it is with the machine. There is so much machine in life that whole masses of humanity are becoming insensitive to the reactions the machine cult has on them.

We cry: "All this is splendid. Man is being saved from shameful toil. His horizon is the whole earth. He can fly to the North Pole. He can sit and listen to a battle in China. Man is becoming a little god. In due course the machine will do everything for him, even dress him and shave him in the morning. The scientists will produce further wonders. We shall live on synthetic food. Perhaps we shall cease to die."

Quite so. But there is the old saying of the man who came to possess the whole earth and who lost his own soul. Are we to have the soul of a machine as our god and tyrant, or the soul of man? The trouble will be that we may fail to realize that we are the bloated little slaves of the machine. Masses of men fail to realize it now.

That is youth's problem as I see it. Youth may cry: "I will travel at five hundred miles an hour. I will visit the moon. I will make just so much money." And then? Yes, that will depend on the spirit in which he does it, as a Lindbergh, or as some poor little purblind cad rushing along a concrete track from nowhere to nowhere. What will the moon be when he reaches it, if he takes to the moon nothing but a self that is a small jelly of intelligence cased in a thing of steel?

The great humanists were wiser. Were Christ faced with this

modern problem, one can hear Him saying: "Render unto the machine that which is the machine's, and unto man that which is man's." Let us realize that our mechanical creations are for service, and not for mere sensationalism. Let us get through with the craze of mere speed for speed's sake, and realize that the latest mechanical marvel may be just a gramophone—playing what? Schubert's songs. And what would that machine be worth without Schubert? All honor to the men who discover and create. They too are artists. It is we who lose the artist in the mechanical toy.

But already I see signs of a reaction. In Germany after the war youth walked; it walked—young men and girls together into the country; I hear that they still walk. I have just been staying in an English country inn, and while the motoring crowd made the village street hideous all day and most of the night, I thought: "How silly all this is!" And apparently there were young people who thought and felt as I did. They came to the inn, quite a number of them in shorts and skirts, and carrying packs. They were walking. They had gone back to their good feet, and to places where the machine was not wholly a marauding monster, the new Peter Pans come to play with the Indians and the Pirates of a young fancy. Yes, and more than that. Youth was rediscovering the quality of life that appeals to youth with a strange sweet poignancy, beauty.

The artist is there, the child reaching out its hands to the sunlight on old trees.

I have a young friend to whom I offered a motor-bicycle. It was a lapse on my part. He told me quite frankly and simply that he was not interested in motor-bicycles. He would not tell me what he wanted, but an aunt of his did.

"If you want to give Bill something, give him a typewriter."

I gave Bill a typewriter. Again—the machine. But to this lad it was a machine to be kept in proper subordination, and in right relation to his craft. He wrote. The machine was to serve his craft.

Later I asked him: "Bill, do you compose on the machine?"

No, he did not do that. He kept the spirit of his craft apart from those clicking levers. He wrote, and only when the poem or tale was finished was the machine allowed to play its part.

Later I discovered that he had a passion for flowers. He was taking charge of the flower garden at his home.

Now, this lad is not a mawkish sentimentalist or a little literary person. He does not belong to the Oscar Wilde period and the cult of the Green Carnation. He is modern youth at its best, frank, wide-eyed, virile, a player of games, strangely wise in its way, sweetly human. And I see much youth like this, clean and eager and urgent, and I think at its best it is better than the best of my day.

That is the problem. I would have the young man of today choose as Bill chose—the spirit rather than steel, the artist's craft rather than the mere machine.

Youth will have to make this choice. If this generation cannot rise to it, a later generation will. It is inevitable; it lies at the back of the soul of man, behind the heritage of ages, in his instincts, in his urges. It is there, embryonic, in the womb of consciousness.

For of what shall we be conscious? Of the multitudinous explosions of the petrol engine, of the roar of the plane, of the discords of the bitter streets, of the din of the workshop, the blare of the loud-speaker, the yelling headlines of the press? Is this to be our fate? Is our consciousness to be chained in a world like a boiler factory or a mill, where metal clangs and machinery swirls? Youth will rebel. It will cry: "Let me possess my soul in silence. Let me see the hills and smell the sea. Let the machine take me just so far and no farther, to the edge of that world where my spirit can play and sing. Let it be me that leaps into the foam or soars among the clouds. Let the machine be my servant, and money my slave."

This will happen. It will happen soon; or it will happen later. It is the great happening that is ahead of the youth of today. And how splendid it can be! We are so much at the beginning of things. Also we are so much at the end of them unless we recover a beautiful humanism. We have got to get our heads out of the jaws of the steel idol. Inevitably so.

Let youth see to it.

For I am both old and young. I have played with the machine, and I have come back to my garden. There are other perfumes than those of petrol and burnt oil. Yes, far subtler and more exquisite and lasting perfumes. There are other things to see than the white glare of the road as it rushes under the wheels. We may hasten and get nowhere. We may rush hither and thither and be blind. I can foresee an age of stillness, and the youth of that age will look back upon this period of noise and confusion, of sensational shoutings and posturing pragmatism, and say with wonder and compassion: "What fool savages those people were! And yet they taught us things, how not to do certain things. They had too many new toys, and did not know how to play with them properly."

If the young man of today will dare to dream and to differ, this world can be a world of new splendor, new freedom. We may have to go out into the desert and fast in order to find our new God. The old gods have passed, and we have been tempted to make a god of our new cleverness. But only when we are artists do we begin to understand the soul of the Unknown Artist, and that is life.

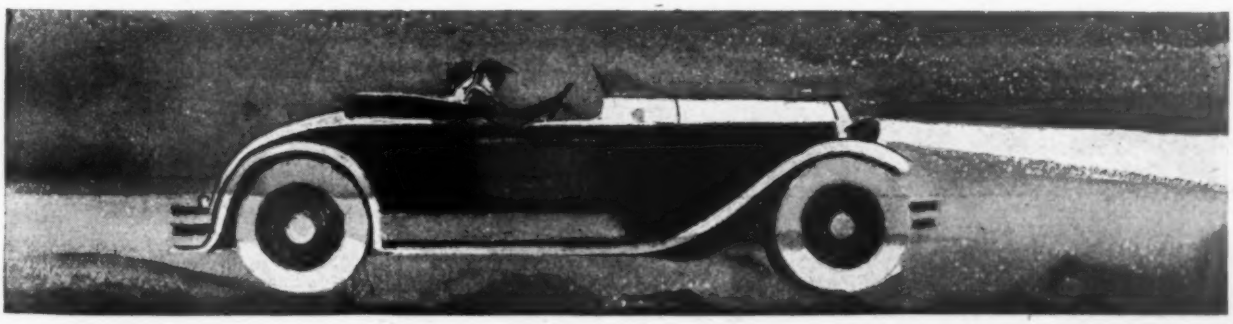
Life is not rushing hither and thither. We did away with many of the old illusions, but our youth of tomorrow will have other illusions to shatter. The dogma of equality may be dying. We believe that life has climbed up variations, and a new generation will dare to vary and to differ. We shall have to rid ourselves of a kind of dreadful crowd-complacency, of a noisy and shallow conceit.

Man is a social creature, but he is not a pea in a pod. We have our fashions in sociology. Sometimes it is the individual, sometimes the mass that is cherished; but mere mass goes nowhere. The great humanists have always appealed to the secret, striving soul of man. Never have they preached to a field of cabbages, and assumed man to be one among many cabbages.

Youth today has its choice. Will it mistake mere movement for life, mere speed for progress? Will it fly like Lindbergh on an inspired pilgrimage of its own, or will it merely rush blindly hither and thither, under the illusion that it is accomplishing something?

Will the young man of today be content to be a half-skilled "hand" in a mechanized world, or will he choose to be the artist, the creative, dreaming, happy rebel? Only by dreaming new dreams until he dreams them into reality will he escape from the crowd. Or rather—he will transfigure the crowd, for we men must live together.

The problem is: "How shall we live?" Like one of H. G. Wells' human automata, like robots, or like men who somehow believe that the Unknown Artist watches us and smiles?



Rushing along a concrete track from nowhere to nowhere.

by
Margaret Culkin Banning

BREAK AWAY

A young wife dares to do what nearly everyone in her situation talks about doing—and does not

KATE leaned over and took a look at the score. She knew how they stood on the rubber, but she wanted to see just how much Alec was sunk. It was certainly pretty bad. He'd been losing steadily, no matter how much they cut around. And losing was one of the things that Alec, nice as he was, didn't do very well. It was beginning to show in his abruptness about any casual error. Of course he couldn't really afford to lose so much, thought Kate tolerantly. It was different with some of the others, but this game would be going on for hours if she tried to dig him out. She hadn't a chance in the world to sleep in the morning, either, and tomorrow night at the Ludlows' would be another late session. She'd look like a hag tomorrow night. . . . .

"Two passes, Kate," said Michael in the tone that only husbands can use without being uncivil.

Third hand, Kate considered, looking over her cards quickly. She knew that she didn't have a bid. Still, it was unusual distribution, and perhaps—

"One spade," she said, and was instantly worried.

Some one at the other table asked if it would be all right to go out and get some more ice.

"I'll get some in a minute," promised Kate.

"No. Stay where you are. I know where the icebox is. Come on, Helen. You make the best-looking barmaid."

Kate didn't want them to go out and hunt around the icebox. After a dinner-party the kitchen never looked as it should. The

Illustrated by C.D. Williams

She wiped the bitterness from her face with a smile. Mike was still playing poker.

cook was tired and sure to have left things more or less in confusion.

"You're playing this hand, Kate," said Alec. "I raised it to four spades."

She frowned. She was beginning to see risks where before there had been possibilities, at least. Why hadn't Alec left it alone?

"It's all right," he said with a threat in his encouragement. "If you had an original third-hand bid, you're safe enough."

She hadn't anything of the sort. She knew she should have kept still. But sometimes, when she was tired, sometimes at this time of night, she didn't bid them regularly. Her thoughts separated into three independent streams. One went toward the kitchen where Helen Merrill and Blake Warner were probably going through every drawer hunting for an ice-pick, one toward the baby's room, and one toward the cards which Alec was spreading on the table. He had a pretty supporting hand, all right. It wasn't going to be his fault.

Helen was one of those precise housekeepers who never had a scorched piece of aluminum or an unscoured knife around her own house, and was very free and informal in other people's pantries and kitchens. The baby was on the sleeping-porch over the kitchen. If they woke him up with all that racket, he'd be awake the rest of the night. He'd had too long a nap today, anyhow. Better to lead to the queen in the dummy. It made her feel such a fool to have Alec watch the way this hand was working out. Spades bunched against her, too. She couldn't possibly set up the diamonds with so many trumps out, and it wasn't safe to lead the spades out, or Mike might get in with those hearts. The only thing was to force him to trump. . . . .

"I'm sorry, Alec," she apologized, gathering up the insufficient pile of their tricks and tossing them in with the rest of the pack.

"It's all right," he said with some restraint. "Too bad I raised you. I counted on you for the tops."

"Of course. You had a right to. It was a wild bid."

Mike Carr grinned.

"Third hand," he remarked, scoring the disaster. "I'm glad I married you for your beauty. Well, Alec, there are days when you can't lay by a nickel!"

Blake brought in an old cracked crockery bowl full of ice, and a battered kitchen spoon to ladle it out with. He put it on the long table on top of a magazine and unconsciously tipped a lamp-shade awry. The whole side of the room had a disfigured, dissipated look. It annoyed Kate, but she was helpless. She couldn't go around tidying up after her guests. But there was a perfectly good silver ice-pail out there if they'd waited until she could get it.

When she was dummy, she emptied four ash-trays into the fire, which was smoldering quietly, opened a window at the distant end of the living-room and slipped out to look at the kitchen clock. It was nearly always accurate, but tonight she thought for a mo-

ment it must have stopped. It must be later than half-past eleven. It felt more like two. No, the clock was ticking steadily and reliably. They wouldn't be going home for a long while yet, and of course she didn't want them to, or the evening would be a flop. She picked up a cloth and mopped the places where fragments of ice had fallen and melted, and then chopped some more, wishing for a hundred ice-cubes. Helen always had ice-cubes. But she didn't have three children and a husband with a business of his own that fairly lapped up money.

The kitchen was untidy. The linoleum had been swept, but there were grease-stains on it. Bowls of ripe olives and celery stood on top of the icebox, crowded out of the cooler spaces. They could have creamed celery for the children tomorrow, thought Kate at random. She threw a couple of soiled dish-towels down the clothes-chute and went into the dining-room to look at the bottles on the buffet. A few empty ginger-ale bottles went into the kitchen wastebasket. There seemed to be plenty of everything left. She straightened the flowers on the table, sighed at a new scar in the wood, and looked at herself distastefully in the mirror. She shouldn't wear this evening dress without having her hair carefully done, and never when she looked tired. A color like this needed spirit to go with it. The mirror told her she looked haggard. "Older than I am," she thought defiantly. "I don't have those waste spaces under my eyes ordinarily."

Of course she knew why they were there. If she'd managed to get some sleep last night, she wouldn't look such a wreck or feel so dead on her feet. But on Tuesday night nobody had wanted to go home from the Aldrichs' dance, least of all herself, and she had counted on making up her sleep last night. Then she couldn't get to bed early after all, because those cousins of Mike's came to call. It was the first time they'd seen the house, and by the time they'd been all over it and had their thirst assuaged and gone home, the evening had gone with them. When she finally did get to sleep, that unseasonable thunderstorm had wakened her and everybody else after a couple of hours. Mike hadn't let it disturb him much, but Kate had finally taken Josie into her own bed because the child seemed so nervous. Josie had fallen asleep there, spread over most of the narrow bed, and Kate had dozed uneasily on the edge beside her.

They were calling her from the other room.

"Kate! Come on. We're waiting for you. Take a cut!"

She went in and cut the king.

"You and Ruth take Alec and me on," said Mike.

Ruth was ahead. She nearly always was ahead—in every way. She was sitting there now, waiting for the next deal, without a hair out of place, in an evening dress that was exactly right for the occasion, and supplemented by perfectly chosen jewelry and a sparkling little evening bag which everyone had admired. She was good for the night, and Kate knew it. She knew, too, that in the morning, if anyone called the Warner house and asked for Ruth, a well-trained maid would say courteously: "Mrs. Warner has not come down yet. May I take the message?"

The Warner children did not disturb their mother. They disturbed a very competent nurse who had been engaged with that understanding.

"I hope I wont drag you down, Ruth," said Kate.

"Of course you wont. Just keep your mind on it, Katie."

At two o'clock Kate was still keeping her mind on it. Or was it her mind? Her fingers, anyway, which could still cut and shuffle and deal, and her eyes which could sort out suits, and some automatic thing in her which knew when to bid and when to support and when to double. She was playing rather more skillfully now, but the cards were running the other way. She had chopped more ice, and so had other people. The liquid level in the bottles on the sideboard had been perceptibly lowered. But Alec's score was no longer disastrous, and he was infinitely more cheery. Celeste, his wife, who looked so thin and fragile tonight, had wanted to go home half an hour ago, but Alec couldn't stop just then. Celeste had stopped playing cards. She was at the piano now. Going over the same old things, thought Kate. She always did that Chopin. Too bad she didn't keep up her music, with a talent like that. But probably she hadn't time. . . . .

"Didn't you see my discard?" inquired Ruth.

Another mistake, and another rubber lost.

"Well, we must go home," said Ruth. "Where's Blake? In the dining-room. It must be awfully late."

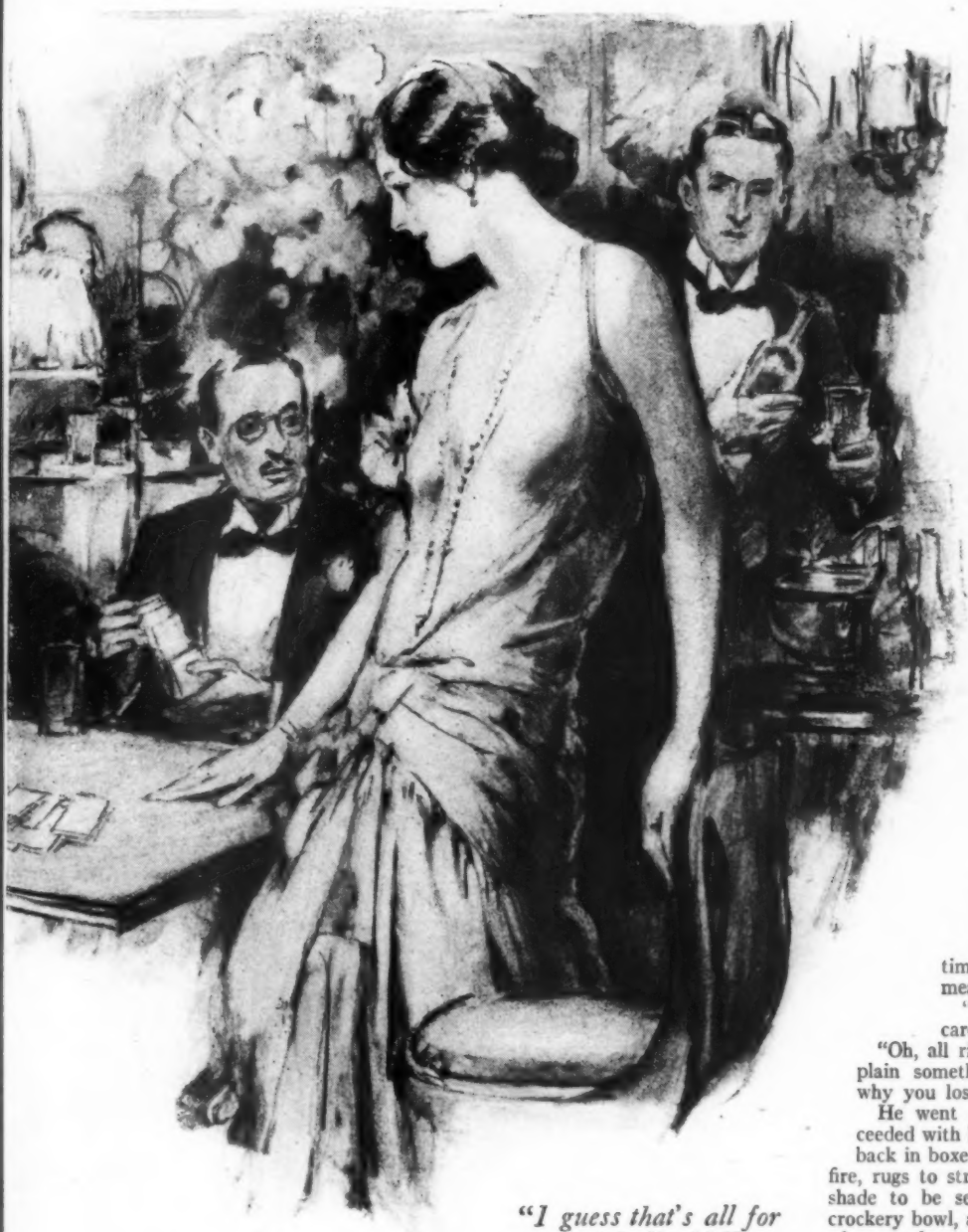
"Oh, I don't think so," said Kate automatically.

"After all that struggle, Alec, you're out two dollars and your time," said Mike, figuring it out. "You pay Ruth."

"Who's the heavy loser?"

"Kate. You owe Ruth seven dollars, Kate, and I'll have to take a chance on the balance, I guess."

Kate borrowed a blank check. She didn't mind losing. In fact, she secretly almost preferred to lose in her own house. It was an instinct of hospitality which protested against the semi-professionalism of their bridge. But losing was getting to be a habit



"I guess that's all for me tonight," said Kate. "Your luck'll turn," said Blake, cheerfully.

with her, no matter where she was. She was writing so many of these checks. And seven dollars was such a convenient sum to her, and so unnecessary to Ruth, who tucked the check away in her glittering purse as Blake Warner came up and put his arm about his wife.

"Winning again?" he asked.

"She deserves it," said Mike. "Ruth plays the steadiest game of any girl I know."

"Just the same, she ought to be home in bed," said Blake fondly, and explained to Kate: "She had a headache yesterday."

Who hadn't, thought Kate.

It had been a delightful dinner and a wonderful evening. They'd had a marvelous time. So they all said, gathering up stray cumbrous adjectives and offering them. But somehow, as Kate said good night to them in the rather flat light of the hall, they did not look the way their adjectives sounded. They looked exhausted. Blake yawned. Alec's face sagged. Celeste's face was colorless except for the unfading line of her lips.

"Good night," called Michael and Kate. "Good night."

The cars backed out of the driveway, and Kate began to clear up a few more ash-trays.

"Can't you let that go until morning?"

"It reeks so if you do."

He folded the card-tables and put them away.

"Well, I guess I'll go up," he said. "This is pretty late for a fellow who gets up in the morning."

She wanted to remind him that he'd had sleep last night, anyway. She wanted him to appreciate how much more tired she was than he possibly could be. But he had already started up the stairs. On the first turn he called down.

"Oh, Kate—"

"Yes?" It would so rest her if he absolutely insisted that she go to bed. It would lift her burden of fatigue.

"You know—if you had come back with a heart that time—you know the hand I mean?"

"No," she said, "and I don't care, either."

"Oh, all right. I was just trying to explain something. And then you wonder why you lose."

He went on up, aggrieved. Kate proceeded with her cleaning: Cards to be put back in boxes, scores to be thrown into the fire, rugs to straighten. The annoying lamp-shade to be set at the proper angle. The crockery bowl, and glasses that seemed everywhere, to be carried to the kitchen. Windows to open. It would make the house cold in the morning, but anything was better than that stale smell. She rinsed out all the glasses. That wasn't necessary, but by this time she was bending backward in an attempt to prove something to Mike. Yet she knew Mike was probably already asleep, and she was merely proving it to the air.

She was on the upper landing when she heard that sound which seemed almost malicious. The stir, the creak of a crib, the inarticulate voice which was not particularly fretful but so very awake. Kate had that moment of being afraid of her own child which only a tired woman can know. She wouldn't go near him. She'd close her door, and he'd go back to sleep.

It wasn't any use. She couldn't sleep without looking at him. And that wind was coming directly from the east. If he was uncovered, he'd be chilled to the bone. She opened the sleeping-porch door and saw the baby standing at the bottom of his crib, wide awake, delighted at the sight of her, ready for an hour's struggle as to whether he would or would not stay under the covers, betting on himself.

"Oh, you cruel child!" groaned Kate. *(Continued on page 92)*

"Nobody wants me to go with Jean; they are all against her."

Us and Company

A story of friendship

by Frederick Hazlitt Brennan

Illustrated by Joseph Simont

WHEN a man is eighteen, he has to face life. And nobody gives him any credit for facing life, either. The world thinks that when a man's eighteen, he's still nothing but a kid. Especially if he's a bit small for his age,—though he shaves regularly every morning,—and more especially if he's a good wise-cracker. Everybody thought that just because he, Thomas Loomis, believed in being pretty darn' casual about life and was—well, kind of clever, he didn't have any real problems.

Thomas Loomis sighed heavily into the depths of a double-chocolate-cherry-and-banana delight. He was sitting in a corner booth at the Sugar Bowl, which is right across the street from the North High campus. He should at that moment have been preparing tomorrow's trig' lesson in old Kaley's study-hall, but he had a "headache slip," and he knew Miss Marlin, the emergency-room nurse, would stamp it for him. When a man's a senior and he's got a lot of serious problems on his mind, he can't be bothered with study periods.

A girl in a white apron approached the booth. Thomas Loomis glowered at her. His reason was not apparent, since she had more than her share of beauty and was smiling at him in a more than businesslike manner.

"Didja get enough whupped cream, Tommy?"

"Uh-huh," said Thomas Loomis.

"Whatcha all frowned up about?" she demanded. "You look like you was sore or something."

He thought of a withering wise-crack, for this girl represented about the most serious problem a man of eighteen had to settle.

"Woman," he said, "if I was a cloud, I wouldn't even rain on you. Chase your dogs away from here."

The girl giggled appreciatively. She thought Tommy Loomis had the hottest line of any kid at North High.

"You're just jealous because I'm going with Joe," she remarked.

He snorted as devastatingly as a mouthful of ice-cream would permit.

"You know better'n that," he said. "You've been dying for a date with me ever since school started. You're playing around with Joe because I asked you like a gentleman to leave that kid alone."

Not without reason had Miss Jean Hobart reigned as queen of the Sugar Bowl since her graduation from grammar school three years back. She could lie serenely with glib rouged lips and purple eyes that looked like a proud kitten's. Now she said:

"I'm going with Joe because I'm stuck on him—just in case anybody should drive up in a hearse and ask yah, sonny boy."

"Little liar," quoth Thomas Loomis. "You'd quit Joe and go with me any time I asked yuh. But don't hold your breath. I'm not gonna ask yuh."

"Is that so? I guess I should cry."

The boy sensed in the expert shrug of her dimpled bare shoulder and the droop of her mascara-ed lashes a certain unwholesomeness. Her calm female superiority dismayed him. Angered, he stopped bantering.

"Just the same, you gotta leave Joe alone," he said. "You gotta leave that kid alone."

"He aint a kid, Mr. Smarty. He's twice as big as you and twice as old."

"He's only half a head taller and three months older. And he's my buddy!"

Miss Hobart perceived the weak spot in the armor of her adversary and thrust sharply.

"Swell buddy you are! Huh! Trying to bust up me and Joe. I bet you wouldn't be his buddy long if I told him—"

"Lookit here, now, woman! If you tell Joe any lies about me, I'll—"

She tossed her head, triumphant.

"Well, don't be so smarty, then, or I will."

Balked on that tack, he tried another.

"Lookit here, Jean, you oughtn't to string Joe along like you're doing. Just because he's got an awful case on you isn't any reason why—"

"There aint no law says I gotta quit going with Joe because *you* say so."

"I don't say so. I'm just asking you. Gee whiz, Jean, we got a big game on next Saturday and Joe's gotta pitch. How's he gonna do that and take you to dances downtown every night?"

"I should worry about a dumb game of ball."

"But gee whiz, Jean, this is an awful important game. It's the league championship."

Her eyes narrowed.

"You aint worried about the game. You just don't think I'm good enough to go with Joe. Just because I don't go to high school, and—huh! Joe's a sweet kid. He aint stuck up like you are."

"Aw, you got me all wrong, Jean. I'd go with you myself only—uh—well, anyway, it's the game I'm worried about. That South High bunch have some heavy hitters, and without old Joe in there—"

A troop of youngsters released for the afternoon recess-period came in. They whistled and yelled and stamped for service. Miss Hobart, answering the bark of her boss, Mr. Nick Pappapolous, with an "Aw, yeah, I'm comin'!" smiled forgivingly over her shoulder at Thomas Loomis.

"You aint sore, are you, Tommy?"

Baffled, the boy growled, "You just better quit going with Joe, that's all," and got to his feet. He deserted half of the chocolate-cherry-banana delight and shoved his way through the crowd. Disdaining to answer the hails of fellow-students,—they were sophs and juniors, mostly, anyway,—he plodded outside and crossed the street to the campus. Adults strolled by on sidewalks. Adults rolled by in automobiles. Thomas Loomis scowled at them. A truck-driver almost ran him down on the high-school side; the driver yelled, "Open yer eyes, sonny!" and lurched grandly on.

Sonny. Ha! A sardonic muttering escaped Mr. Loomis' lips. Sonny. That's what they thought. They called him Sonny, and Tommy, and beamed on him as if to say, "Run along, little boy, and roll your hoop." Ha! What did they know? It isn't years that age a man. Responsibilities are what make a man old.

When the best friend you'll ever have has developed a terrible case over a girl like Jean Hobart, you have something to worry about, haven't you? And when your best friend's folks have acted like darn' fools and nearly got divorced mostly because of your best friend's behavior, that's a responsibility, isn't it? And what about the game for the baseball championship of the High School League? When you and your best friend are the star battery of a big school like North High? And that doesn't take into account the fact that you're bass-drummer and business manager of the high-school band, conductor of the high-school jazz orchestra, assistant editor of the annual, and president of the Zete Zekes.

Responsibilities! Why, it was a wonder he didn't have gray hair. He'd noticed that his temples were getting a sort of iron-grayish color—well, not exactly iron-grayish, either, but he wouldn't be surprised to find them white some of these days. And who would understand? Joe would, and maybe—

"Tommy!"

The soft-spoken word brought him back to the campus steps. A pretty little girl put a hand on his arm. A pretty little girl with yellow hair and brown eyes and something darn' spiritual about her face.

"Oh, hullo, Wilma," he said.

He looked down at her as from an enormous height. He felt like patting her gently on the head and saying: "There, there, little girl. I've got problems, but *you* mustn't worry. You wouldn't understand, anyway."

"You got a class, Tommy?"

"Yeah. Chemistry lab."

"I wanted to talk to you about the dance tomorrow night. I've got to sing in the entertainment part, and I guess you'll have to lead the orchestra, but—"

Quickly: "I guess I'll prob'ly be awful busy, Wilma."

"Oh. Then you—well, that's perfectly all right, Tommy."

He softened. Even if he did have responsibilities, he didn't want to break this woman's heart, or anything like that.

"I might as well come by for you," he said, "—unless you gotta date with some one."

"I haven't a date with anybody else, Tommy. When will you be by?"

Casually: "Oh, sometime, I guess. Where's Joe?"

"I saw him in the alley, fixing your car."

"Little liar," quoth Thomas. "You'd quit Joe and go with me any time I asked yuh."

His heart quickened. Good old Joe! He'd go right now and put this thing up to him—man to man.

"I guess you better be by b e f o r e eight-thirty—" The girl's voice blurred.

"Okay," he said, and already was hurrying toward the alley. Wilma was merely the creature of secret sentimental moments — but J o e was h i s buddy.

Joe lifted his face from the innards of an ancient flivver as Tommy whistled. Joe didn't return the whistle; Joe wasn't much for making unnecessary noises. Joe, doggone him, was a funny kid. When Joe spoke, his words were the distillation of slow, deliberate and somewhat mysterious thoughts.

"What the hell you doing, you big dumb-head?" said Tommy.

Joe grinned and jerked a dirty thumb toward a loose-hanging timer.

"If you'd quit monkeying with this bus for five minutes, we'd have a good car," Tommy observed.

"We got a good car now," said Joe.

Good car? Of course it was a good car. It was the oldest and rattiest flivver parked in that alley—an alley w h i c h looked like a junk-yard. It was *their* car. His and Joe's. Its sides were decorated with Tommy's wise-cracks, the most uproarious of which was the white-painted observation: *"I've got k i d n e y trouble."* Two months back he and Joe had raced their car against a selected field of North High flivvers. They'd won t h a t race, too, even if they had had to push the exhausted flivver across the line. No other flivver even finished; it was a trying race, twice around the running-track at the old athletic field.

Joe looked dazed, stricken. Tommy heard Jean saying nervously:

Tommy kicked viciously at what was left of the fender on his side.

"It'll be a junk-pile when you get through with it, you big bum!" he growled. "Look at your face. Gawd, what a map!"

Joe grinned again, and wiped his face.

What was wrong with Joe's face? Not a thing. Why, Joe, doggone his dumb head, was the best-looking kid in North High. Joe had a square chin with a cleft in the middle of it—Miss Prouty, who taught Advanced Art 4, had begged Joe to pose for the class (quite futilely)—and high-school girls had been known to confess at fudge parties that they'd like to run their fingers through Joe's crisp sandy hair. Joe's face was a good thing to see under a football helmet as you called his signal with seven yards to go for a touchdown. Ask Tommy! Joe's face cheered you up when you looked at it through a catcher's mask and you wanted the heavy hitter to break his back swinging at one of Joe's fast ones. Ask Tommy!

"I flunked my history quiz," said Joe, still tinkering with the little car.

Tommy snorted.

"I wrote out all the answers for you. Huh! Thick head!"

"I got the numbers of the questions mixed," said Joe.

"No brains. Not half a brain."

"That's right," said Joe.

No brains? Heck, the teachers just picked on Joe and got him rattled. No brains? Why, Joe was the smartest kid that ever went to North High. Joe was the only kid on the swimming-team that ever doped out the rhythm of the eight-beat crawl. Joe knew angles on a basketball goal-board that the coach himself didn't know were there. Joe knew how to time his breath for the eight-eighty and the four-forty and the two-twenty runs. And when it came to feeding ether to a ten-year-old flivver or making an outboard motorboat do thirty-five an hour through white-caps, Joe was a whiz. No brains? Huh!

But when it came to women—

"Listen, Joe."

"Yeah?"

"You're coming out for practice this aft, aren't you?"

"No."

"Why not? Gosh, Joe, we gotta get your control in better shape."

"Aw—my arm's sore."

"Well, then, you're gonna stay in and study tonight, aren't you?"

"I got a date."

"Who with?"

"I don't go but with one girl."

"But heck, Joe, we got this game on Saturday. If you're not up in your studies, Coach wont let you pitch."

"I'll study tomorrow night."

"Tomorrow night's the big dance."

Joe examined his knuckles. Tommy knew what that meant. Joe was embarrassed. Then Joe whirled and danced lightly around Tommy, thumping him with pulled punches on the chest.

"Tommy brought me, Joe. I've decided I'll go with Tommy after this."

Tommy shoved him off. He knew what that meant. Joe wanted to change the subject. He wanted to change a thinking tussle to a physical tussle.

"You're coming to the dance, aren't you? We'll need you to toot that old sax for us, Joe."

"Sure," said Joe, "I'm coming. Fact is—I gotta date for the dance."

Tommy stared at Joe. A date for the dance? Was Joe going to crash Jean Hobart into that dance? Did Joe have it that bad?

"Oh, are you taking Marjory?" said Tommy.

Joe examined his knuckles again.

Tommy grabbed his arm.

"I don't go but with one girl," said Joe.

"But—Jean isn't in high-school, Joe. She's not supposed to come to our dances."

He saw the old stubborn glint in Joe's blue eyes. He knew what Joe was thinking. Joe was so darn' democratic. He thought everybody was as good as everybody else. Tommy saw something else in Joe's flushed face—an alarming, almost terrifying thing. It was emotion. Emotion in Joe, who never got sore or let you know he felt one way or the other about anybody.

"She's coming to this one," said Joe.

The two-minute gong sounded. Tommy'd have to go to chemistry lab. He tried to have it out with Joe in one sentence, man to man—but he couldn't say the words. What he did manage to utter was: "Your folks will be here tomorrow, wont they?"

"Yeah," said Joe. "Why?"

The two words were truculent. Joe had seen some connection between his taking Jean to the dance and the arrival of his folks.

Tommy found himself staring at the rusty side of the ancient car. Painted on the one door partly remaining were the words: *"Owned by Us and Co."* Us and Company. He and Joe. He couldn't have a row with Joe. He just couldn't. Why, Joe was his buddy! Us and Company.

"Oh, nothing, Joe," he said. "I'll see you tonight, hey?"

"You bet," said Joe.

Vastly troubled, Tommy went on to chemistry lab. . . . .

That evening Tommy tried to seek advice and understanding in the world of grown-ups. Joe had gone out for his date with Jean Hobart, and Tommy was alone in the living-room with his father and mother. Since the rupture between Joe's parents, Joe had been staying at Tommy's house.

"I'm having a heck of a time with Joe," said Tommy, out of a silence.

His father lowered the evening newspaper and regarded him with just the suspicion of amusement. His mother put down her magazine and kept her face straight with a determined effort. Tommy was *so* precocious, and his troubles *were* funny.

Father said: "What's Joe up to now?"

Mother said: "Oh, I do hope Joe hasn't gone off on another one of his tangents! What on earth's the matter this time?"

Tommy paced the floor, trying to impress his elders with his maturity, trying to say: "I'm not just a kid any more. Why can't you treat me like a man?" But he could not.

"Well," he declared, "it's this way: Joe's in love with a girl I don't approve of."

"Joe'll get over it," said Mr. Loomis. "Puppy love doesn't last long, thank heaven."

Mrs. Loomis smiled in spite of herself.

"Why don't you approve of the girl, Tommy?"

He shrugged in the regretful way a hardened man of the world might shrug if compelled to pass judgment on a light woman.

"She just isn't Joe's sort, Mother."

"Who is she?"

"Aw, her name's Jean Hobart. She works at the Greek's."

"She's a nice girl, isn't she?"

Whisperings he had heard about Jean Hobart were heavy on his mind. But he said: "Aw, I guess she's nice enough. But she's not the kind of girl Joe should go with."

His parents exchanged glances. He saw with a sinking heart that they were not disposed to take this problem seriously.

Mr. Loomis observed: "We can't pick Joe's girls for him, Tommy. You shouldn't try to, either. Joe's folks will be home in the morning, and if they don't approve of the girl they can settle the affair."

To this his mother added: "I think you might impress on Joe that this is a poor time to start trouble for his father and mother."

That was as near as Mr. and Mrs. Loomis ever got to discussing Joe's domestic situation with Tommy. They thought Tommy knew nothing of the trouble *(Please turn to page 148)*

A novel of a wife who held to a small-town standard after moving to New York—and her daughter and husband who didn't

MANHATTAN MIRAGE

by Sophie Kerr

The Story So Far:

"EFFIE, my girl—what d'you think! I've got an offer to go to New York at sixty thousand a year! It's one of the biggest banks in New York! That lawyer Bishop was a scout, sent to look me over."

Walter Reyburn had cause for excitement: He had been a small-city success—an important bank official with a salary high for Drochester. And the Reyburn family—Walter, his wife Effie, their daughter Nancy, and their schoolboy son James Terry, to say nothing of the terrier McNab—had been a happy one until recently, when in a fit of anger at the antiquated régime of his superior Parkinson, and of jealousy caused by the promotion of Effie's old suitor Carl Pardee, Reyburn had resigned his position; and a blue time in the Reyburn household had followed. Now, however, the gates of Gotham glittered bright before them.

So the Reyburns migrated to New York, to the delight of Walter and Nancy, the distress of young James Terry and the anxious perplexity of the still young wife and mother Effie. For the standards of the metropolis were new and strange; Nancy in her new school showed evidences of becoming a snobbish little climber; and Walter, preoccupied largely with business, had the rest of his attention diverted by Mrs. Evans—a man-hunting divorcée relative of Bishop's.

But because of Nancy's passionate desire to achieve a social success, Effie Reyburn set herself to the distasteful task of prying open the difficult doors of exclusive New York. And continually, in the most unobtrusive way possible, Bishop behind the scenes aided her.

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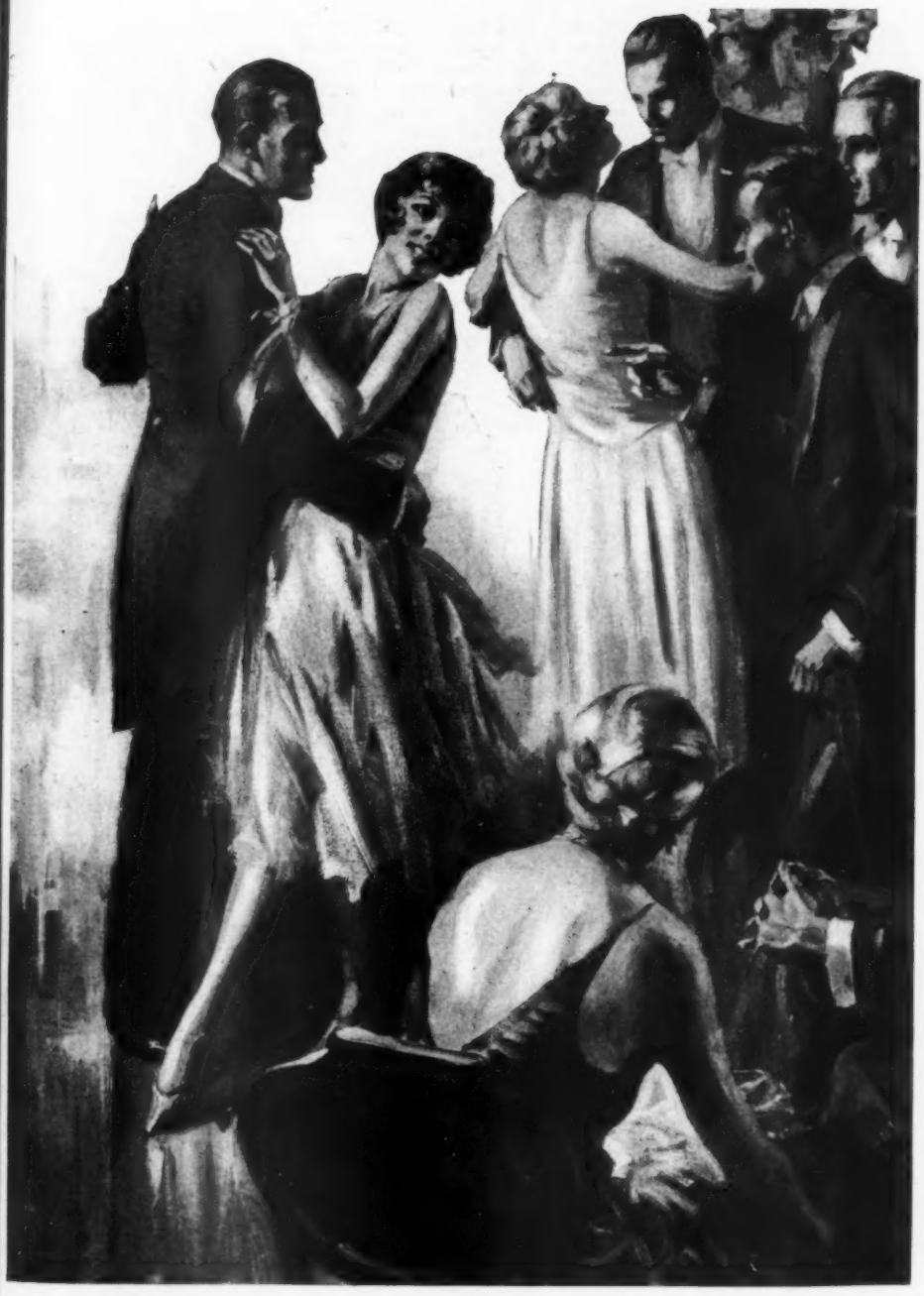


Illustrated by Marshall Frantz

I love him; we have been so happy. And now I feel so broken."

And one small question stuck tormentingly in her mind: why had he kept the check?

Meanwhile she continued to work hard for Nancy. And Nancy herself campaigned cleverly among the younger set. The unattractive but sought-after scion of the wealthy Copley Villiers family was an avowed suitor, though Nancy retained her friendship with her devoted Drochester friend Bruce, and spent a good deal of time with the ambitious young playright Rascoe Blaine. Her social success seemed assured when Mrs. Copley Villiers suggested that she would like to join with Mrs. Reyburn and bring out the two daughters together at one party.

When Effie told Walter, he took all the credit to himself and his business association with Villiers. Yet somehow his egotism was endearing to Effie, as a nice little boy's brag and swagger are endearing.

"Oh, Walter," she said, "you precious old darling! I love you even if I am so stupid and you're so smart."

He moved away from her brusquely. "You needn't be sarcastic," he said. "You can be very sharp-tongued, Effie—and it gets you nothing. It alienates the very people you ought to be friends with—"

She stood staring. He had never, never thought of this himself. He was speaking with another tongue, with outside prompting. By a flash of divination she knew instantly to whom this other tongue belonged.

"Walter," she said, "did you pay Lora Evans that four thousand dollars for pointing out my faults to you?" *(The story continues in detail:)*

THE mere flinging of the question broke her long hard-held reserve. "What is she to you?" she went on. "I know you see her; I know you're attracted to her; and I've held my tongue even when—Walter, please be honest with me and tell me the truth. You and I can't lie and cheat with each other." The words were jerked out, by power beyond her own. They hurt her as she said them, but she could not help saying them.

The bright handkerchief at her wrist was the oriflamme every lad followed.

Effie's other problem, however, became heartbreaking indeed when, picking up her husband's coat from where it had dropped on the closet floor, a slip of paper in the inside pocket rustled under her fingers. Unthinkingly, she pulled it out. There in her hand lay a canceled check, signed with her husband's name. It was made out to Lora Evans, and the amount was four thousand dollars.

For long Effie could not reach any conclusion. There was nothing to do but wait. No possible good could come of playing the conventional jealous wife. It would only create blank chaos in a family where there was, she felt, sufficient confusion now. Yet her reason and heart merged into one cry, humble and honest: "It is partly the money, I admit, even though I don't know yet why he gave it to her. But there is something more than money.

"I'm neither lying nor cheating," said Walter at last. "I loaned Mrs. Evans some money when she was fearfully hard up and didn't know what to do. You are so prejudiced and unfair to her that I didn't tell you. That's all there is of it."

"No, it isn't all. It isn't anything! She's turned you against me; it was she who told you that I—how would you like it if I discussed your faults and failings with another man, and reproved you solemnly for what he found lacking in you? Walter, I can't understand, I can't *understand!*"

"You're excited and unreasonable; you always are when Lora Evans comes up. Just because you and I are married is no reason why we should not have friends, is it? Mrs. Evans is—is—a woman of the world. She's very—she's very—amusing and interesting to me. I don't mind letting you or anyone else know it. She—she has a different viewpoint—"

"Walter, you'll be telling me next that she understands and appreciates you!"

"So she does." He rapped it out sharply. "She does understand me, and she does appreciate me, in a way you never have and never can, you're so set in your petty, small-town viewpoint. She appreciates my hopes and ambitions—she can see what my future will be. And as for lending money to her, or to anyone, you have no right to make objections. I earn that money; I can use it as I see fit. I've never been stingy with you and the children, have I?"

"No," said Effie, "you haven't. But in my small-town way I still do not see the necessity of your lending four thousand dollars, and more, for all I know, to a shady person like Lora Evans. She wont pay it back; she never intends to pay it back. She's working you for a good thing, as she's done with ever so many men before you—"

"She has *not!* You've no right to say that."

"You're so angry, Walter, I'm sure you must have given her more than four thousand." A realization of this ugly, shameful scene swept over her. "We mustn't talk like this," she said. "It doesn't matter what you've done, or what I think; we mustn't talk like this. Walter, the money doesn't matter, though it did shock me frightfully to think of you giving her that huge amount when we're so pinched—but it doesn't matter. The thing that matters is that she's separated us, she's made you critical and harsh with me, and she's provoked me into saying things I never could have imagined to you. Walter, I'm frightened."

"I don't know what you're driving at." He was sullen, like a pouting, obstinate child. "I don't exactly enjoy having you fly off the handle like this, you know."

"I'm simply playing into Lora Evans' hands," she thought. "I'm giving Walter a real grievance, and she'll sympathize with him. Oh, I've been stupid, stupid!" Aloud she said: "We mustn't quarrel like this. It spoils everything we've had together."

"Mrs. Evans will return what I've loaned her," said Walter stiffly. "She's had a bad time in her business, people not paying their bills."

"Never mind about that."

"But that's what you were making all the fuss about."

She disregarded this. "Walter, we've always had such a dear and happy life together; we've been friends as well as lovers; we've been companions—I'd rather be with you than anyone in the world! I can't bear to have all this go without trying to see why, to find out what's wrong. I'm lost without you—" She stopped; he was listening impatiently, almost boredly. Not once had she broken through the wall that divided them. She went on calmly, seeking for understatement, underemphasis, as safest. "I'm not sorry that we've talked this out, because I've felt so bothered and worried. You know, now, what I think about this money to Mrs. Evans, and about your talking me over with her. I don't want any of this to come out in front of the children."

He shrugged and turned to leave the room. "If you don't tell them, I certainly sha'n't. You're jealous and unreasonable, and unwilling to look at things in their true light. You want to keep on living by Drochester standards, which are ridiculous here. Sophistication may be painful to you, but it's necessary in a city like New York."

In spite of her pain Effie could have laughed, his air of dignity and superiority was so diverting. She wanted to say that nothing could possibly be more unsophisticated than a small-town man who comes to New York to be captivated by a conventional shop-worn siren, and made to pay through the nose for her acquaintance. But that was not, with Walter, a fair statement. There was something touching and pathetic in his view of himself as the complete man of the world, wise and seasoned. "If I could only make him see!" she thought. "But I can't. The only thing

I can do is to march on and say nothing, act as if nothing were happening. Lora Evans is capable of a lot worse than she's done so far; and if I anger and irritate him constantly, he'll turn to her more and more for her own special brand of flattery and justification. But where is it going to end? That's what I daren't ask!" She thought of the easy and casual way the people all about her spoke of divorce—Zena Ardberry saying, "Everyone's entitled to at least one divorce," and another young matron following it with, "There ought to be a divorce coupon on the marriage certificate; cut it off and send it to the mayor or somebody, and there'd be no tiresome trip to Reno or Paris or Mexico." Even in the Villiers set there were many changes of name, and Effie had heard Mrs. Villiers complain bitterly of the difficulties of placing people at dinner so that no complicated marital transitions were embarrassed.

"We had divorces in Drochester," Effie's thoughts raced on. "But they weren't so absolutely matter of course. What am I thinking about! Divorce *Walter!* This divorce thing is an infection, a disease. I must have the taint of it when I can even dream— I think I'm going crazy!" She put her hands to her throbbing head.

Presently, to distract herself, she went to her desk and wrote

Mrs. Villiers was ashen with weariness; her husband sagged and scolded. But Nancy was buoyant.

a letter to Nancy, telling her of Mrs. Villiers' offer and her acceptance of it. "Nothing could be better, it seems to me," she wrote. "I take it for granted that you'll like the idea; I didn't even wait to ask you before saying yes. You'll have the advantage of the entire Villiers connection, which is large and important—thank heaven it doesn't include all the defunct great-uncles; and you'll be an 'official' débutante, included in all the 'official' débutante entertainments. You wont have to leak out, or peer in at the windows, as you feared. Your real popularity will depend on yourself and how you behave; but I certainly wont worry about that, and I don't believe you need to." She paused; she felt a special need for Nancy's love, Nancy's confidence; she wanted to see her, to have her near. She went on: "I miss you very much, darling girl, and so does your father. Don't cut your stay short, even by an hour, since you're having such a good time, but please don't prolong it. We're all dull and mopy without you, and this includes MacNab, who hasn't a wag left in his system."

She found James Terry alone on the terrace. "Dad's gone to town—he's got to see somebody on business," he reported. "Said he mightn't be back until late. Well, what do we care? Let's have some fun on our own."

Walter's absence was a profound relief. She didn't care at the moment if he had rushed to console himself with Lora Evans, it was so grateful to have him away.

"We'll mail this letter to Nancy," said Effie, "and then I'm yours to command. Anything you say to do goes, James Terry. Write your own slate."

"Atta girl!" crowed James Terry. "On our way!"

Because Effie longed so ardently to think it unreal, she had no supreme difficulty in banishing for the moment her distress about Walter and herself. Only now and then it caught her, unaware, and twisted her heart with a cruel acute pang. "I dare say I can get used to that after a while," she thought desolately. "People get used to doing without their eyes, or their right hand." But she made herself very gay and laughing and jocular for the benefit of James Terry, and when Walter came in at midnight, she pretended to be asleep.

The next day, too, they avoided one another, and the next. And then Nancy came flying home, in the highest spirits, pleased with herself, with her visit, her return, the Villiers invitation, her family and her prospects, but keeping her head perfectly and appraising it all without illusion.

"It's more than I hoped for," she told Effie. "I couldn't believe my eyes when I got your letter, and I didn't say a word to Ariana or Charlotte, or anyone, but I felt awfully purry and chuckly inside when Ariana was swanking about her party. She'll be so flat when she hears it! Ariana's not very generous; she wasn't as nice to me at her house as I was to her here. But I didn't notice—I mean I didn't seem to notice. I got what I wanted."

"What did you get?"

"Now don't be snippy to your child. I got just what I went there for, a lot of new friends, and I placed myself in a lot of people's minds as somebody who'd always been in everything. You know there are ever so many débutantes for next year sort of coming to the surface; they've been at school abroad, or their families have been in mourning recently, so they haven't been noticed. Now when I come out with Margery Villiers, all these people will recall me at Southampton with Ariana. It's almost as good as having a background of your own family and relatives. Almost—not quite. I only hope Cop Villiers—"

"What about Cop?"

"I hope he wont get it into his head that because I'm in this with Margery, it means I want him to be serious, even if Ariana's mother as good as told me I'd better grab him if I can."

"Nancy—did Mrs. Wood say that? That was impertinent."

Nancy laughed. "Mrs. Wood's a beautiful creature, hard as a steel beam, and cold as an Arctic ocean of fish. At first she looked me over pretty much as she might have looked over a new dog she was thinking of buying. I don't think she wanted me there at all; she's pushing Ariana for all there is in it, and so why bother with a little outsider? You see?"

Nancy laughed again. "But I was merely kind and a trifle amused when she was ritzing me, so she stopped and began to take an interest. We had some very illuminating talks. And she advised me to take Cop. She'd be glad enough to get him for Ariana, and that's her highest praise for any young man. She ought to know something about young men, Mother; she's got half a dozen tame robins hanging around constantly, but naturally they're not for Ariana. All the old girls of her set have 'em, and they're always fighting about them! It's screaming."

"You encourage me. I think I'll look about for a string of useful lads."

"Any time you do! Mother, I'd beat you! Not but that you could get 'em—you're much more attractive than Ariana's mother; but you're not the same sort."

"I suppose," said Effie, thinking of Walter, "I'm not a woman of the world."

He came in, wretchedness in every line of him. "Walter—what's happened?"

"Blah—it's not that. But that stuff of Mrs. Wood's, with her gigolos—I mean, it seems all right for her; it's accepted; no one seems to mind. All the same, between you and me, it's sort of loathsome. And anyway, it's not the kind of thing for the Villiers set, and it's the Villiers set we're mostly tied up to."

So there was sanity under Nancy's calculating hardness, sanity and balance, thought Effie with relief. The girl hadn't been carried entirely away into the world of externals. She could think for herself, and though she might conform and condone the ways of Mrs. Wood and her kind, she didn't find them admirable.

"Yes, when we're Villiersing, do as the Villiers do," said Effie. "But I can't quite stand Mrs. Wood recommending Cop so highly."

"Mother—would you mind my marrying Cop Villiers?"

"Very much indeed."

"But why? It would make a good match—for me—under the circumstances."

Effie spoke very gravely. "If you married Cop Villiers, it would be for the money and social position of his family. And that would be everything advantageous you'd get. I don't deny these things are advantageous. But when you offset them against the horrible task of living, day and night, with a man of Copley's low morals, low intelligence and repulsive body—no, my dear, you couldn't stick it. And before I'd hand you over to the paws of that young beast—you've no idea to what lengths I'd go. Now there it is, in plain language."

Nancy shuddered. "Yes, too darn' plain. I dare say you're right—only of course you're old-fashioned; you believe in romantic love. That's because you and Dad have always been so crazy about each other. But there aren't many young men hanging about who're like Dad."

There was such pride and confidence in her voice that Effie could hardly answer.

"Even so, go mighty slow about Copley Villiers," she cautioned at last. She would not jeopardize, by a word or sign, Nancy's utter belief in her father.

Chapter Twenty-seven

WITH the announcement of the double coming-out party, the Reyburn family entered the more intimate Villiers aura. Where heretofore they had been accepted vaguely as friends and summer neighbors,—"One always knows so many new people in the summer, my dear,"—they now appeared as actual members of the cast of the social comedy, rather than as scenery. They went back to town in their new rôles. The immediate effect of the change was much publicity, and all the horde that comes after publicity. There was a large increase in invitations, mostly from people who were milling anxiously about the Villiers circle, without any chance of entering it. There were also invitations from the insiders, and each one accepted brought Effie and Walter into touch with still more of the insiders, who inspected them thoroughly, "as if," Effie said, "we were up for membership in a very ultra club."

Nancy, too, had her invitations swell to pick-and-choosing numbers, and she did her sifting with uncanny insight, accepting first all from girls who would surely be popular, second from girls who might be popular, and third—very few—from girls she really liked. She made herself almost inseparable from Margery Villiers, and even Mrs. Villiers approved to the extent of telling Effie that Margery had never had a friend who brought her out so well. Effie repeated this to Nancy. "How do you do it?" she asked; and Nancy giggled. "I try to make her forget that she's homely and that she's a Villiers. Outside of those two handicaps, she's all right, you know, Mother. She's not as amusing as Ariana, but she's ever so much more kind."

Photographers called up and wanted to get pictures of Nancy and Effie; portrait-painters desired them to sit. Editors of society news besought information of their plans for entertaining. Their trade was persistently solicited by caterers, florists and decorators, stationers, bridge-teachers, hairdressers, tobacconists, beauty-parlors and the shops which specialize in débutante frocks, and hats and shoes and lingerie. After a good bit of hunting, Effie engaged a woman who could be generally useful; she could act as maid to Nancy, answer the telephone and deal with nonpersonal calls, write notes and make out checks, and in an emergency lend a hand in the running of the apartment. She was a cheerful sardonic soul named Maud Thorndike, who had seen better days, and having no professional training, found it hard to find work which paid her enough to live on. "I don't know what to call this job I'm offering you," said Effie, at their *(Please turn to page 106)*

LIFE'S TOUCHDOWNS

Plays that win big games—and their application to your life

by Francis Wallace

A RUNNER crosses the goal-line, completing a run which wins the game and causes eighty thousand people to riot emotionally.

What did you see on the spectacular gridiron screen? Instinctively the casual eye follows the ball and misses the maneuvers of teammates which make the triumph of the ball-carrier not only possible but sometimes easy. This fleeting moment of glory which you witness began months, sometimes years, back, and is a mere quintessence of a vast amount of thought, patience, discipline and physical labor. A bigger drama lurks in the background of every picture thrown on the screen; and the methods used to win the gridiron classic are not merely spectacular; they are based on principles that may be diverted to your own problems in the bigger game of living successfully.

Photos by International Newsreel

Strong, of N. Y. U., returning Harpster's punt. Note the blocking by Strong's team-mates.

Sit back and watch while we run off a movie of the high-lights of last season, with glimpses behind the scenes.

The football year began, not in September, but as early as January, when some schools held winter practice, and in March and April, when most colleges hold spring drills. Daily sessions with the fundamentals of blocking, tackling, kicking, passing, running: hard physical labor on the field, and mental labor in the classroom without the spotlight's warming glow or adulation from the crowds—teaching of the many little things which, assembled, produce the faultless machine you see on the field. During summer vacation the football warrior was busy at hard physical labor preparing for the fall; as early as mid-August, when Navy starts work, the sweating and plodding began again.

Then the first big game of the year—a jazz opera in the picturesque West Point Stadium which looks down upon the Hudson from the top of a high hill.

Southern Methodist came up from Dallas with special trains, a student jazz band, ten-gallon hats and a forward-pass attack—primed to achieve national recognition by defeating Army, which, led by the brilliant Cagle, had one of the best teams of the year in prospect.

Riding up the hill to the Stadium, the invaders were perfect examples of the under-dog—faces set firmly as the chiseled rocks in the side of the hill, not seeing friend or foe, conscious that all of their being was consecrated to the worthy task at hand, ready to make every sacrifice to win—American boys entering a football stadium in the same frame of mind a Moslem enters a holy war. Understand this under-dog and his psychology, and you have the answer to the football upset.

The Mustangs played like crusaders; never had an Eastern gridiron witnessed such a display of passing. Army, taking the game in stride, sent in replacements continually, but the Methodists played until they dropped. In its last few minutes the game was almost fantastic; inspired by their band, which scorned stately alma mater sentiment for the pumping strains of "I've Been Working on the Railroad," the invaders began a march on their twenty-yard line that stopped just short of the Army goal; and they lost by only one point because Cagle, dodging in and out like a hurrying pedestrian in a Times Square crowd, had made one of his runs.

But even a Cagle couldn't get by that line of scrimmage once in ten times without help from his own men; and the more efficient they are, the more brilliant is Chris. What happened on his flashy tour? When the play began, Army linemen blocked their adversaries; the right end drove in the Mustang left tackle; and an Army back drove out the Mustang end. Preceded by another back, who mopped up the Mustang full, Cagle went through that hole and began his artful dodging and slipping—but the eye watching him missed the gorgeous battle royal in which ten Cadets were attempting to prevent eleven Mustangs from getting a clean shot at their runner. There is great excitement in one knockdown in a boxing match—there should be ten knockdowns in almost every football scrimmage, if every man is doing his job as taught.

Two weeks after the Methodist game Army defeated Harvard, and on the next Saturday entered the Yale Bowl, something of an under-dog itself. Yale, which had lost only one game the preceding year, had just repaid that debt to its conqueror, Georgia, and was thought to have a great squad; and despite the fact that it had often brought superior teams to the Bowl, Army seldom had come away with a victory.

Army was on edge; Yale was sloppy. The issue was settled early, when Cagle got away for two of his best runs of the year—the first around his left end, and the second through his left tackle. In both he was aided by his team-mates, of course, but also by

Perhaps the most disheartening "break" in football—a fumble instead of a touchdown. Army recovers the ball from Notre Dame over the goal-line.

Eli ineptitude. On the first run, an inexperienced Yale right end, who should have driven Cagle in toward the rest of the players, played so far in that it was an easy matter for Allan, Cagle's interferer, to knock him into the mob and give Cagle the entire side of the field to work on. Meanwhile other Army men had knocked their men down until Cagle, speeding along the side-line, had only the safety man to beat—which he did by his copyrighted change of pace. On the second tour Cagle went through a hole in the line opened by his own men and went the rest of the way unaided, dodging and changing pace, again beating the safety man. Poor tackling lost that game for Yale.

The season hit its dramatic peak two weeks later in the last few minutes of the Army and Notre Dame battle; but these minutes, years old in passing, were also years old in their foundations. Notre Dame's remarkable eminence on the gridiron began at West Point in 1913 when Rockne was a player; and the Notre Dame coach and his team rose to the heights chiefly through victories over Army. Moreover, since the Navy game had been canceled, the Soldiers regarded the Notre Dame affair as their big game—and prepared to pay off the Irish in the same coin they had dispensed at the Bowl and the Harvard Stadium. Army had beaten Notre Dame the previous season and was ambitious to make it three out of four and two straight—having never won two consecutive games from the Hoosiers.

The time seemed ripe. The Notre Dame squad had already lost to Georgia Tech and Wisconsin; it was stigmatized as the poorest group Rockne had ever coached and seemed destined to be the first one which would lose three games in one season and two straight to Army. Rockne was in the toughest spot of his career—and although Army knew the Notre Dame coach and his team would bend every effort to redeem their season at the expense of the Cadets, Army knew that it had the better squad and plenty of incentive of its own.

Rockne told his boys, as always:

"Don't go in there to die gamely—go in there fighting to live."

Army, confident, actuated by revenge, swarmed over its opponent at the beginning; but Notre Dame's chastened boys, with the mental and emotional attitude of the condemned with one slender chance of escape, fought to live. Their incentive was stronger; and except for one flurry at the beginning of the second half when Army scored a touchdown after Cagle's short run and long pass, the Cadets had been decisively outplayed and Cagle had been anchored back of his line of scrimmage. Playing with exquisite certainty, Notre Dame had tied the score in the second half, and with two minutes to play, was driving for another touchdown.

Then the drama began to seethe—and back of every play was a story, a motive.

Chevigny, who had been playing an inspired game, missed a pass from center on the Army fifteen-yard line, and the ball rolled down the field with Chevigny and two Army linemen in pursuit. Had either of the two linemen picked it up, a touchdown was probable, as the Notre Dame team had started the other way, and in untracking itself would have been engulfed by the rest of the Army team in a savage squall.

It was a football break of the most drastic kind. The pass from center was perfect; but Chevigny was temporarily out of his head and missed the signal. What happened? Instinct, developed by long sessions of falling on a loose ball, sent the fighting Notre Dame kid after the ball; he fell on it and held it, even after the frustrated Cadet linemen fell upon him heavily. On the bench, Rockne sensed Chevigny's real condition; and although the halfback had been carrying the attack, Rockne decided that a fresh substitute of ordinary ability was of more value than a tired star. So he sent in Billy Dew; and in the excitement O'Brien, a comparative unknown, replaced another regular at end.

It was fourth down and twenty-seven yards to gain. Army coaches may have smelled the next move; but the harassed Cadet squad, breathing premature relief and naturally expecting a punt, had no conception of the background of the next play, which, because of its dramatic setting, will always live in football tradition.

Back in the Yale game the desperate Elis had successfully executed long passes against Army, particularly in the last quarter. A scout reported to Rockne:

"Nave, the Army safety man, is short. A tall receiver who can jump and catch a pass well will have a good chance of beating Nave to a long pass."

O'Brien, a high hurdler in track, and a basketball man, was not a defensive star at end; but he did have the faculty, developed by long practice, of sneaking down the field to get under a pass; he was tall, a good jumper and a good receiver. Although he had caught two passes against Navy, his name had not been prominent since, and it is quite likely that when Army scouts went over the Notre Dame team before the game they may have failed to lay stress upon O'Brien as a pass-receiver.

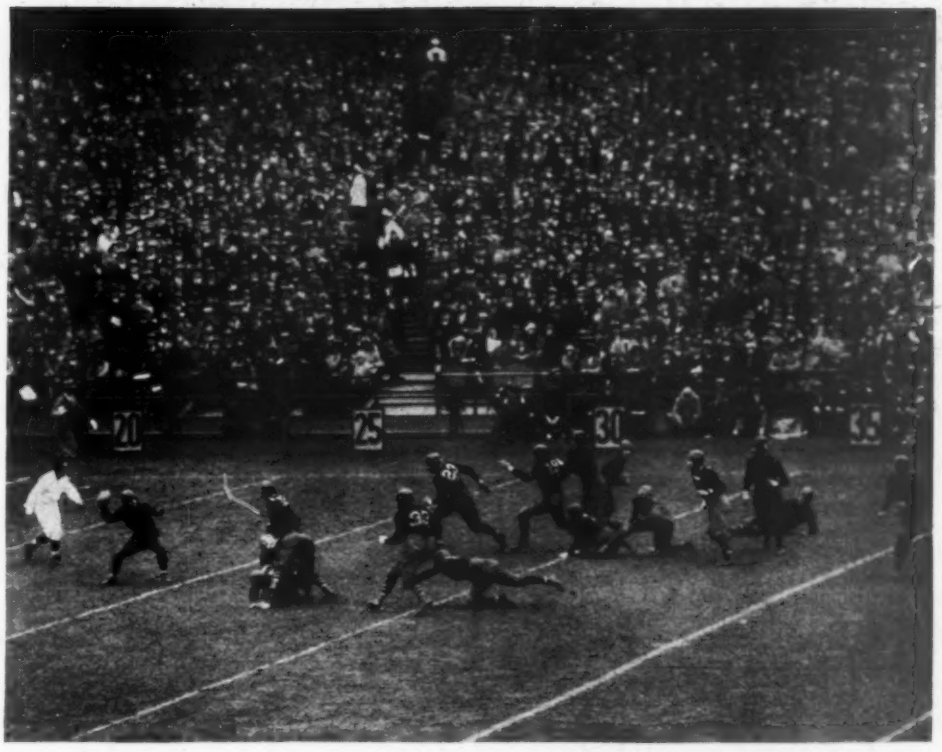
An incoming substitute is not permitted to speak to his mates until after the first play—to prevent him carrying information from the coach; but when O'Brien came in, every Notre Dame player knew that he was sent in to meet the emergency; that Rockne was telling them once more not to die gamely with a tie and moral victory, but to fight for life.

Niemiec dropped back, ostensibly to punt, took the ball, faked a run and began looking for his receiver. Too late, Nave and Cagle realized that O'Brien had passed them and was into the strategic zone with nobody between him and the goal. Niemiec threw the ball perfectly, so that O'Brien, without checking his

speed, had only to turn his head slightly and take three steps after catching the ball.

Few moments in the history of football will excel that one for its paralyzing effect upon the mentality of eighty-six thousand people and its contrary effect upon their emotions.

Then what happened? Because Army would attack and O'Brien was not a good defensive end, the lanky specialist was withdrawn from the game—his reputation made forever by one play. Notre Dame, jubilant, relaxed—and the man who kicked off made the mistake of directing the ball to Cagle. The Army flyer, anchored all day because Rockne had planned a defense for him which had been carried out with that deadly certainty, was loose at last—and his mates, forced to fight for life themselves, gave him so much help that Chris carried the ball to the Notre Dame thirty-yard line before he was checked by Freddy Collins—who was, incidentally, playing a great game with his wrist in a cast.



Niemiec of Notre Dame throwing a forward pass at the last instant before the Army forwards reach him.

Army had a chance, but it had to work fast; and in this last minute the Army offense and Notre Dame defense poured everything of themselves, what their coaches had taught them, all the stimulation of the mighty tradition of their schools and of this particular gridiron classic, into their work. Cagle threw a pass—which was broken up by the fresh substitute who had replaced Chevigny—Billy Dew, not a star but one who was not to be sucked away from his defensive zone and who resisted temptation under great stress.

Cagle ran again, this time for fifteen yards, and Army had first down on the eleven-yard line.

Then the Cadets faltered—not physically, because they were moving magnificently, but mentally; they couldn't agree on the next play, and not only lost valuable seconds but five valuable yards as a penalty. Cagle tried another pass which was knocked down.

Then Biff Jones did a daring thing—he took Cagle, his mainspring, out of the game. Cagle might have scored on one of the three remaining plays; he may have been tired, or hurt. Hutchison, who succeeded him, made another incomplete pass, and Army was penalized five more yards. Just when it seemed as if the threat had expired with Cagle gone, Hutchison passed to Gibner, who made a marvelous catch on the five-yard line. Hutchison hit the line and was stopped after two yards. The game ended there; and it was so exciting that neither referee nor head lineman could say after the contest whether Army or Notre Dame held the ball. The figures and downs, however, reveal that the Army threat had been checked on the three-yard line, where Notre Dame would have had first down had the game not ended.

A sensational football game played between schools whose meetings always develop the unusual, cleanly played by traditional and honorable rivals, full of breaks and situations—but won and lost by fundamentals.

Rockne was eulogized for his strategy of putting O'Brien in and pulling him out—true enough. But this gesture would have been futile had not Chevigny been so thoroughly drilled in recovering a fumble that he could do it when out of his head; had not O'Brien so persistently practiced his peculiar talent that he was able to come through in his one big moment; had not Niemiec been throwing passes under pressure ever since he was a star on the high-school team at Bellaire, Ohio; had not Carideo, Notre Dame quarterback, sensed that O'Brien was to take a pass; had not every lineman and backfield man done his full duty in protecting Niemiec so that he could wait until O'Brien was free before he threw the ball; and had not Army's backfield defense permitted O'Brien to get away.

The game might still have been won for Army had not Collins made a great tackle on Cagle after the mistake on the kick-off, had not Dew broken up that pass—and had not Army delayed in making up its mind before the goal-posts.

Army made more mistakes than Notre Dame, which played with exquisite certainty. *Why?* Because Notre Dame went into that game with the better mental and emotional poise of the dangerous under-dog.

But the next Saturday the situation was reversed. Carnegie Tech was still undefeated—and two seasons back, the Tartans had upset an undefeated Notre Dame squad on the last day of the season. Notre Dame had not lost on its home grounds for twenty years; and a victory over Carnegie would not only accomplish obviously desired results but would help redeem the early-season defeats and also keep the Irish squad from being the first to lose three in a season under Rockne.

Notre Dame had plenty of incentive; but it had spent its emotional reserve the week before. Carnegie had its own incentive—it had a line on the national championship, and there was still unusual glory in beating a Rockne-coached squad. Furthermore, Carnegie went into the game enjoying its first emotional spree of the year. It clicked with that same exquisite certainty that the squad at its peak always shows. The game was decided within five minutes after the first whistle—chiefly by an end-around play featuring Rozensweig.

The Notre Dame regulars were so ragged and stale that Rockne was forced to replace them by an inexperienced second team which, fresh and vibrant, threatened to pull the game out of the fire—but only with plenty of help from Howard Harpster, all-American quarterback, who directed the Tech attack.

Just as Army had violated a rule of gridiron tactics by not keeping the enemy on the run when they had the ball on the Notre Dame goal-line, so did Harpster *(Please turn to page 116)*

Illustrated by W. V. Chambers

He whirled her so quickly and easily into his arms that the spin left her dizzy.

SKY ROCKET

by Arthur T. Munyan

Joan plunged on the two greatest gambles in life—love and the stock market

"THIS," said the man to the Kat, "is a nelegant apartment. Look at that built-in ship model. There's zelegance for you." The half-grown tabby eyed him solemnly.

The apartment, not to mention the Kat, belonged to Jack Powers, who was now abroad. It was in one of the smartest slums in New York, and had a bathroom of purple glass. The Kat sat on the threshold and watched the present occupant of the place shampoo himself.

Black hair became plastic with white foam. The man caught a lock of it in a bronzed fist and twisted it into a pointed horn on the top of his head. Then he turned and stared owlishly at the Kat. "Whoosh?" he inquired.

The Kat bristled. His eyes became black pools of alarm. He arched his back and flattened his ears. With a crook in his tail, he took one hostile step, only to wheel with a Kat-kall and scamper. "With a rowley-powley, gammon, and spinach!" said the man.

This was a game the two played. It made life exciting to pretend that these disguises were quite horrifying. The man now made himself some beetling white eyebrows and a pair of fiercely curled mustachios of shaving cream. Turrible Tedward, the Kat-Slayer, went swashbuckling out into the living-room.

The two were stalking each other around there when a latchkey grated in the outer door and a girl entered upon the scene. Just inside the door she stopped speechless, as anyone very well might.

"Oh!" she gasped.

Fortunately, the man was dressed, if not precisely dressed, in old tennis flannels and a white broadcloth shirt. He was wholly poised. With the briefest glance at the intruder he inquired icily:

"Well? Was there something—"

"I'm sorry! I'd never have crashed in like that, but I thought the place was empty. I'm Joan Powers. I got hold of my brother's key to this place the night he sailed. It occurred to me I'd use it some time for a party that was getting raucous."

Her host, as it were, turned on his heel and walked off to the purple bath. He came back minus whiskers and what-nots and said:

"Yes, it occurred to your brother first that you would."

"You're Mr. North, then?" Her voice had a low-pitched, charming quality, and she spoke in an easy, forthright manner. He nodded carelessly to her question. "Isn't it—Ted North?" she persisted. When his reply again was only a slight nod she spoke more curtly. "Can't you *say* something? —Have *you*," with an accusing look at the Kat, "got his tongue?"

"Yes, I'm North. What of it?" He was absolutely at ease, quietly inimical. His eyes had the still cold glint of partially drawn steel.

"Jack's often spoken of you. You're the aviator, aren't you?"

"No, I'm just the fellow who flies the ship."

"Jack's always said you were nice. Now, what object had he in lying like that?"

North merely shrugged. When he glanced at her he had to concede that she was not unattractive. Straight slim legs, slender figure, a long throat: patrician lines, certainly. She was wearing a tailored rig of soft tan stuff, her hands thrust into the jacket

pockets with a certain debonair manner. Under the brim of a careless and expensive felt hat her eyes were a deep hazel, very clear, unswerving. The lift of her head, the curve of her nostril, gave her a suggestion of arrogance.

"Be a little careful there, you, Kat!" North advised amiably as the animal climbed his trouser leg and perched on his shoulder.

"I wonder," she said dreamily, "what that cat sees in you."

"I feed him."

"That's cheap cynicism. Are you that way about women, too? I suppose you're one of the ones who say they're like cats."

"No. That's a stupid slander."

"It's stupid to slander women?"

"It's stupid to slander cats."

She would not, she resolved, be drawn. She asked urbanely: "This is idle curiosity, but why do you hate me, a comparative stranger? Have I said something?"

"I don't hate you. I don't do anything at all about you."

"You don't," she agreed. "Or I didn't hear you if you offered me tea or a cocktail."

"It was an oversight. Will you have something now?"

"I'd be almost afraid you'd poison it."

"Poison would improve tea, if I had any tea, which I haven't. It would be a needless repetition to poison this Jones Law gin." He moved toward the kitchenette, and the Kat, over-sanguine about food, scampered after him. "Such affection!" North sighed, as it rubbed against him, purring. "Kat, I'm deeply touched."

He returned presently with a frosted shaker and two glasses. Filling both, he ironically tasted his own before handing her hers.

"Kat," he inquired, "did you ever hear of any woman ever going anywhere without getting something out of somebody for it?"

Joan became motionless with her glass half raised to her lips. "If you feel that way about this cocktail," she flared, "you may damned well keep it!"

She had meant quietly to set it down, but his airy shrug was too much. Rage possessed her; her heart seemed to stop. Anger choked her, goaded her to violence. "Oh!" she breathed, and flung her glass fairly at his head. At once she felt better.

It had not hit him. He moved merely his head and let the missile sail over his shoulder to splinter on the wall. The Kat, much entertained, went pouncing after the fragments.

"Women," said North coolly, "and imbeciles, are immune, I suppose. You take no risk at all, with a great air, don't you?"

Joan smiled. "Kat," she said, "the strong, silent man seems to be up a stump."

"Not entirely." He came over to where she was standing, whirled her so quickly and easily into his arms that the spin left her dizzy. She was not hurt, but held powerless to move. His gaze met hers, traveled on to her lips with cool deliberation. For seconds he merely considered her, attenuating the suspense until she almost wished that he would kiss her and have it over. His lips came close, almost touching hers; Joan's eyelids flickered. . . . .

She heard him utter a clipped "No!" as if he had spoken to himself, and found herself free. Facing him with blazing eyes, she was rather taken aback to see that his expression was grave, troubled rather than insolent.

He went to the window and looked out, turning his back to indicate that she was free to go. He stood there until he heard the apartment door close behind her.

"Well," he said at last, to the Kat, "I don't imagine we'll be seeing her again." There was no elation in his voice. He frowned. "Women are—"

He once had married one. Lila Merrick had seemed to embody all the charm and graciousness reputed of her sex. Lila North had shed the mask and revealed herself as sullen and graceless a trollop as ever lived. Marriage became not an alliance but an exploitation of a man by a woman. Lila assumed no duties; duties were his end of it. Looking back, North could not recall having ever seen her at any task not wholly self-centered and—inferentially—ridiculous. Such as lacquering her nails, with feline and infinite care, an incredible *couleur de rose*.

Lila set herself to the pious business of manipulating him immediately after the honeymoon. A test pilot, North was putting all his spare time into plans for an aircraft engine. Lila could not ascertain whether the thing when put together would benefit her or the Future of Flying. With such infatuation she had no patience, and she said as much. Indeed, more.

Ted North was mulish; Lila sniveled, raged, sulked, devised endless petty exasperations. He continued his work; Lila fought him with sabotage which took every form from insulting his chief on the telephone to snipping secretly the buttons from his clothes to point out the result as an example of his utter shiftlessness.

He slowly acquired an armor of ice. Unfortunately, it cracked once. . . . . Lila summarily served him in a suit for separation at the hospital where he was surviving the crack-up of a plane. She won her suit, and he was glad to be rid of her even on terms that held him in bondage. He sold out his plans, as well as his services, to the Sturgiss Aircraft Company.

Today he had no strong feeling about Lila herself. He simply avoided all women. They were a sinister, predatory force. They

"A divorce would be a nuisance. If I gain nothing by it, why bother?"

had subtle ways of coercion and tyranny. And yet the donkeys of the law regarded them as innocent and deeply wronged beings! Plainly, the least dalliance with any one of them led a man into slavery.

Joan's reactions after her meeting with the disillusioned Ted North were complicated. At first, to be sure, she was merely furious; vague, murderous thoughts of reprisal went flitting through her mind. But a great perplexity began to assert itself: why had he not kissed her? Had he scrupled, or just not cared about it?

"One," she reflected, "is about as bad as the other—at that range. What's wrong with me? No man ever passed me up like that before!"

A plan of action gradually emerged in her mind: it combined reprisal and research. "I'll go back," she decided. "I'll make him do it, and want to, and like it. And what I'll do to him after that is nobody's business."

A letter from her brother, mailed in London, began as his letters always did by asking a favor. "Sis, I have three hundred shares of Bessie, and I want to get out of it. Call up Thurlow and have him sell at the market, will you? Have him credit my account."

That out of the way, Jack cast about for some amiable patter to pad out the letter. "Why don't you look up Ted North and have him around to one of your beanos? He's a good egg. Of course, he'll probably insult you. Don't mind that. It's just his way. He's one of those—what's the name of 'em—optimists, or something that sounds like that. Know what I mean? Hates women. I don't blame him. He married God-knows-who and she took him over the high hurdles."

After the exciting latter part Joan just managed to remember the first part of the letter and call up Thurlow. "Bill? Say, Jack's long three hundred Bessie and he wants to shed it. Do the necessary, will you?"

"Sure," said Bill. "An'thing else, Jo-Jo? How 'bout tea?"

She hung up, marveling momentarily at the airy ways of Wall Street men who handled a trade in five figures over the telephone with a yawn and a "How's Jack?" But her mind returned at once to Ted North, now with a certain compassion.

Jack had thrown in a few details about a calamitous marriage. Then Ted North was not after all, perhaps, that unpleasant abnormality, a genuine misogynist, but on the contrary rather a decent sort, made cynical by experience. Men liked him. The Kat liked him. Evidently the person had an urbane side, if it could be got at. It might—Joan reflected—be a good idea to make allowances. So far as his personality went, she was attracted; he seemed dynamic, vital in a way she liked.

Armed with her brother's letter and the flimsy pretext of a key, she drove to the El Dorado Arms and had herself announced. The man's greeting was anxious; he plunged at once into what seemed to be a sort of narrative.

"I was working at my desk, and I heard a footstep approaching—"

"You heard a footstep approaching," she agreed. "How did you know whether it was approaching or retreating?"

"I looked around and there came the Kat, wearing a shoe of mine on his left front foot." He pointed, indicating the phenomenon. The Kat was indeed wearing a number nine tan brogan on his left front foot. "I said: 'Of course, if that amuses you.' And then I saw he couldn't get it off!"

"It doesn't *look* too tight for him," Joan observed.

"Well, it is! What am I going to do? Every time I try to pry him loose he acts like this." He made another clumsy attempt to free the Kat, who ejaculated "Ouch!" and added an unprintable utterance inaccurately called a spit.

"Oh," she breathed, and flung her glass fairly at his head.

Joan bent down, slipped slender fingers into the vamp of the shoe, and extricated the claw. The Kat sauntered off as unperturbed as if the thing had never happened.

"Thanks!" North gasped. Evidently, it struck Joan, the Kat was useful either for insult or amiability.

She chose an Italian Renaissance chair with deliberation. With her head tilted back against its somber carvings, her arms in repose along the chair arms, she studied the man calmly. He seemed very tall today, austere but good to look at, in a suit of dark blue. "I had this letter from Jack. Read it, wont you?"

He took it, scanned it with a slight frown. "It's about stocks or something," he told her—adding, "*Oh,*" as he reached the part about himself.

When he looked up she asked: "Is that your trouble?"

"If I try to see my ex-wife I'll be jailed. All right with me. If I stop her income I'll be jailed. Not so good. I'm neither married nor divorced. Is that what you mean by trouble?"

"She's not your wife; yet you can't marry some one else?" she asked. It seemed somewhat fantastic.

"You always find the silver lining, don't you?"

"But how— How could she win such a suit! I never heard—"

"What grounds? 'Cruel and unusual treatment,' or some such."

"Were you cruel and unusual to her?"

"Yes. I—ah—spanked her—with—a—a hairbrush."

"You sp— Where—I mean—"

"The worst place I could have chosen. New York."

She regarded him quizzically. "Well, I dare say she had it coming to her, but I wish you hadn't. What I mean, I suppose, is I wish you couldn't have thought it up."

"I didn't. There's an O. Henry story about a woman who wanted to make her husband black her eye. I said, 'Maybe Lila's one of those!' It seemed reasonable. So I tried the experiment. I wasn't as calm about it as I sound now, because she had just poured India ink on a drawing I worked on eighty hours. Anyhow, it was my mistake. There was no pleasing the woman."

"You should have wrung her neck," Joan said frankly. "But why be cynical about things, and hate women in general, and all that?"

"I'm not, and I don't. I don't even hate her. I'm entirely matter-of-fact about everything. I've had my experience; it was plenty; it's over. I haven't the least complaint."

"You were rude to me, simply, so far as I can see, because I'm a woman."

"Yes. Nothing personal in the least. When I have to talk to a woman I ask heaven to send me words to be rude with."

"Well, heaven certainly gives you service! But do you think it's fair to judge the others by the one you knew? Women differ."

"Yes, fair enough. She was an exaggeration, probably, but she was feminine. Essentially feminine. A man can be a cad, of course, but no man alive could be the sort of cad she is."

"The difference between her and any other girl is merely one of degree?"

"Yes. Women differ. So do men, cats. . . . . But cats at their cattiest are all alike. It's the same with women, men—"

"Well, you like cats, or appear to."

He made an impatient gesture. "I don't mind women being alike; I mind them being what they are, and then only because I'm a man. If I'd been a mouse, I wouldn't care about differences in cats—they'd just be cats to me."

"This," said Joan abruptly, "gets nowhere. I suppose we are alike, in a sense. I don't claim *I'm* a new species, for instance. And I don't know why I argue with you. I've nothing to gain. But I'll make you a present of a Thought for Today: There are times when a man's brains aren't worth the brains of a dead moose; there are times when a woman is more—gallant than a man. A man who has no women friends is out of luck. If you think all women act like spoiled babies, or that almost any woman would take money from a man on the terms this Lila does, you're simply off your rocker, old boy. As a lowly example, I'm one who'd see you in hell first. How about dining with us one day soon? Jack's suggestion. Would you care?"

He bowed slightly. "Delighted to. If it matters either way," he announced after a pause, "I'll believe you're different. You seem so. You are a new species to me. Sorry I was rude the other day. And I'm glad I didn't—didn't—"

Joan sighed. "If all the ones who never did are going around being glad about it, I must be the ray of sunshine, because the comparatively few who did were not heard to complain, either. Are you going to offer me a drink? I'll practice not throwing it at you."

There was mild magic in a twilit ritual of cocktails like liquid opal in stemmed glasses. They sat in a cushioned window alcove, looking out over the East River where it spread like a great steel mirror to the long catenary of the Bridge. The city was quiet; tugs whistled with friendly toots as they plied back and forth. The strings of tow lights, the red and green running lights, made moving patterns of color.

Ted talked a little about himself, particularly his immediate plans. "I have to go to Chicago tonight. No, I'm flying. No, I'm not the pilot on this hop, so I can sleep all night if I like." Today was Monday; on Tuesday he would give the ship he was to fly back a final inspection; Wednesday at dawn he would take off for Roosevelt Field.

"The flight has something to do with your engine?"

He nodded. "The Sturgiss Skyrocket. Not my engine any more. Some of my ideas are in it, but a hundred other men have worked on it."

"Does that hurt?"

"No-o. It was too big for me." He could not talk about it; until after this test flight it was a company secret. Rumors of block tests had leaked out already, but the company's plan was to keep the whole thing dark until they could come out with a big story about performance.

But the general idea was this: The Skyrocket was unique, a new aircraft power plant. Existing motors were really modified automobile engines. This was new; light, *(Please turn to page 145)*

A youth from the country comes to Chicago, and his city friend indulges in natural fears for him

"Yes," she cooed, "he gave it to me, and it's down in the office safe."

The HICK

by Seven Anderton

Illustrated by Lloyd Osborne

I WILL admit that there was a time when I shared what still seems to be the general opinion concerning the sons of the soil. I believed that they were simple souls who came to the cities now and then for the express purpose of finding a lion with which to lie down.

I labored under the popular delusion that simply living in a city infested by millions was enough to make a person infinitely more clever and more devilish than those who inhabit the rural districts.

I have been shown my error. The brief visit recently paid to Chicago and me by one Jerry Bartlett utterly destroyed my delusions concerning the guileless rustic.

My weekly pay-check is provided by a Chicago morning newspaper. On the day of Jerry Bartlett's arrival I had dropped in at the office to get my mail before going to lunch. My daily grind did not ordinarily begin until half-past two in the afternoon. I found half a dozen letters in the mail rack and went to my desk to read them. I had no idea that my reasonably well-ordered existence was on the verge of an upheaval until an office-boy suddenly appeared at my elbow.

"There's a big bozo at the door askin' for you," the boy informed me. "He says he's from Nebraska and his name is Jerry Bartlett."

"Bring him in," I told the grinning boy.

The name brought back memories of a pleasant week I had spent hunting prairie chicken in Nebraska during the preceding fall. Jerry Bartlett was the son of a rancher at whose home I had obtained board and lodging. I had found the Bartletts delightful hosts. The son had proved himself a good guide and an amusing companion on my hunting tramps over the hills. I remembered inviting Jerry to look me up if he ever came to Chicago. Evidently he had not forgotten.

I rose as the boy came piloting my guest to my desk. Jerry was a big youngster, tall and clean-limbed. He was tanned to a deep brown by the sun and wind of his native prairies. I noted that he was dressed in a well-cut suit of quiet gray pattern. Low shoes and soft hat were in perfect taste. Only his tan and something about his swinging stride betrayed that he hailed from the hinterlands—until he spoke.

"Hello, Mr. Saxton," he cried as he grasped my hand in a grip that left my fingers numb. "You must be some pumpkins around here. I had to argue with so many hired hands that I begun to think I'd have to push my way in if I wanted to see you."

Jerry's voice was designed for far more space than the newsroom contained. As it boomed out above the clatter of a dozen typewriters and the clicking of the telegraph instruments, a score of reporters and sob sisters on the early shift turned their eyes toward the speaker.

I smiled as I rescued my hand from those long brown fingers. Jerry certainly looked capable of "pushing" his way in. Nell Barnes at the society desk cleared her throat and winked meaningly as I met her gaze.

"What brings you to Chicago, Jerry?" I asked.

"A freight train brought me, along with six carloads of Dad's steers," answered Jerry. "But I'm goin' back on the Overland Limited after I have a few looks around this town."

"How long do you intend to stay?" I inquired.

"Mebby a day—mebby a week," answered Jerry. "All depends. Dad said I could stay as long as I wanted to—just so I kept out of trouble and didn't go messin' around in any gang wars."

By this time our audience was grinning broadly. Several of the girls had stopped work entirely and were eying the well-knit figure of the young rancher with mingled approval and amusement. I glanced at the clock and noted that it was five minutes until noon.

"Have you had lunch?" I asked.

"No," answered Jerry. "And that makes me think. Mom sent

you a cherry pie, but I got hungry last night on the train and eat it."

"I was going to take you to lunch," I grinned. "But just for that, you can take me. Wait until I look at the book and make sure of my hours."

As I passed the sports-desk, Bob Meade put out a detaining hand. "Let me sell him Grant Park before he leaves town," begged Bob.

Nell Barnes called to me and I stepped over to her.

"Introduce me to Young Lochinvar," she whispered.

"Nothing doing," I demurred. "He's supposed to keep out of trouble."

Nell made a face at me, and I walked away to check up on my hours in the shift-book. Just as I was closing the book, Bob Meade called:

"Say, Joe, be a good fellow and take a little yarn for me. There's a dame on the phone with some dope about a kid's athletic tournament, and none of my help is here yet."

I went to the phone indicated by Bob, and for the next fifteen minutes was occupied with the details of Bob's story. When I turned from the phone, I saw Nell Barnes in a spirited conversation with my guest. Evidently Nell had introduced herself quite successfully. The two were laughing and chatting like old friends. I waded into the party.

"Sorry to tear you folks apart," I said, giving Nell a mean look, "but I have a lunch coming from this big stiff, and I mean to get it right now."

I seized Jerry's arm and began dragging him toward the door.

"So long, Miss Barnes!" he smiled. "I'll sure call you up."

"Don't forget," she called after him.

"Say, you," I said when we were in the corridor, "how do you get that way? Do you want everybody in the office sore at you?"

"Why?" asked Jerry.

"Because every single man on the staff is trying for the inside track with Nell Barnes," I informed him.

"Don't blame 'em," grinned Jerry. "She's a peach."

Over our lunch in a near-by restaurant, Jerry confessed that he had a "hankerin' to see some gamblin' joints and such places" that he had been "readin' so much about in the papers."

"I thought your Dad told you to keep out of trouble," I reminded him.

"I'll not get into trouble," Jerry declared. "I aint got very much money on me. Left most of it at the hotel, like Dad told me to. I just want to see some of them places."

It didn't take long for me to realize that it was waste effort trying to discourage Jerry, so I decided to take him to a place that was not distant. He was delighted when I made the offer, and we couldn't get started soon enough to suit him.

On our way to the dive we passed a candy kitchen. In the window was a tray of walnut taffy, such as delights the heart of youngsters between five and ten years.

"Wait a minute," said Jerry. "I want a sack of that taffy."

I went into the place with him while he made his purchase. I wondered at an appetite that could crave taffy following a lunch such as I had just seen Jerry put away. He put a piece of taffy into his mouth, tucked the sack into his pocket, and we proceeded.

He passed the dice-box. "Take 'em while they're hot, Mister," grinned Jerry. "I got enough."

The place to which I took Jerry was one of the best-known gambling dives. The usual Saturday afternoon crowd was present. Craps, blackjack, roulette and various other games were being well patronized. The place was blue with tobacco smoke. As we moved about the huge room, I explained to my Western friend that the place was just a plain sucker-trap. I told him that the percentage was in favor of the house by big odds. I bore down hard on the impossibility of a player winning any worthwhile sum. I pointed out that it was a mathematical certainty that any man who bucked any of the games would lose in the end. Perhaps I overdid my picture in my zeal to protect my young friend from the provinces. Jerry nibbled contentedly at a chunk of taffy he held in his left hand and listened to my discourse.

"You're sure all these games are like that?" he asked, halting suddenly near the table where the crap-game was in progress.

I nodded a vigorous affirmative.

"In that case, I'm goin' to have a few rolls with the dice," remarked Jerry. "I got a curiosity."

Evidently I had been wasting my breath. Jerry edged into the circle about the table, and I took a station at his shoulder to watch the disaster. I hoped he had told the truth about leaving most of his money at the hotel—and I made a mental resolve not to loan the fool kid so much as a thin dime.

Jerry watched the game, but made no offer to place a bet until his turn came to throw the dice. Then he drew a ten-dollar bill from his pocket and tossed it on the pass line. The banker raked in the bill and shoved back ten silver dollars. The look-out tossed Jerry two dice from an assortment in a box at the banker's elbow. Jerry crammed the remainder of his chunk of taffy into his mouth and picked up the red celluloid cubes. He turned them slowly over in his brown fingers, evidently making sure they were "square."

"This holy terror throws the gal he is holding at the one with

A smile passed around the table. The wise guys were amused at this bumpkin's scrutiny of transparent dice.

"Do they seven all around, big boy?" chuckled a thin fellow on the other side of the table.

"Yep," answered Jerry soberly, dropping the dice into the leather box from which they were to be cast. "And now I aim to make them seven on the table."

Giving the leather box a vigorous shake, the young Nebraskan sent the cubes rolling out to the center of the table. They stopped with a four and a trey uppermost.

"Seven," chanted the look-out. "Pay the line."

The banker shoved another stack of ten silver dollars over beside the one in front of Jerry. My friend picked up one of the stacks and dropped it jingling into his pocket. Again he picked up the dice and dropped them into the box. Again they danced across the green cloth and stopped with a four and a trey up.

"Another seven," sang the look-out. "Pay the line."

Ten more silver dollars were shoved over to Jerry, who made a gesture indicating that he would bet twenty on the next roll. Again the speckled cubes galloped to the center of the table and halted with a four and a trey on deck.

"Seven, again," snapped the look-out, snatching up the dice. "Pay the line."

Murmurs ran through the circle of players.

"The kid's hot."

"The farmer's lucky."

"I'm ridin' with him."

The look-out tossed the dice into the box beside the dealer and

the gun and makes a bull's-eye. Both gals go down in a heap."

picked out two fresh ones. Jerry stopped gouging at a wad of taffy which had stuck to his teeth and picked up the new dice. He subjected them to the same scrutiny as before. This time there were smiles, but no remarks. There were now forty dollars stacked in front of the young rancher.

"Shoot it all," announced Jerry as he finished inspecting the dice and dropped them into the cup. Out rolled the cubes, stopping in front of the look-out with a five and a deuce on top.

"Seven," cried the look-out. "Pay the line."

Again there was the ripple of excitement around the table. Bets, large and small, were pushed out on the line—some with Jerry, but most of them against him. There was eighty dollars in the stack of silver in front of him as Jerry again dropped the dice into the cup and announced his intention to "shoot it all."

The dice rolled again. For a breathless second it appeared that they were again going to stop with a five and a deuce uppermost. Then the deuce toppled out of sight and a trey took its place.

"Eight's the point," chanted the look-out, shoving the dice back to Jerry.

It was now up to my young friend to throw eight before he threw seven, or the silver before him would be raked in by the banker. Jerry picked up the dice, blew on them, wiped them vigorously on his coat-sleeve and dropped them into the box. He shook the box sharply and sent the cubes dancing across the table.

"Six," sang the look-out, tossing back the dice after they had stopped with two treys up.

Jerry dropped them calmly into the box and again flipped them across the table. A sigh came from the watching circle as the cubes halted with a six and a deuce staring at the ceiling.

"Eight," barked the look-out. "Pay the line."

The banker shoved eight ten-dollar stacks of silver over to Jerry, who calmly began stuffing it into his various pockets. When he had stowed the last dollar, he passed the dice-box to a man at his side.

"Take 'em while they're hot, Mister," grinned Jerry. "I got enough."

"You sure must be carrying a rabbit's foot," I remarked as he turned toward me. "They'll give you paper money for that ballast over here at the window."

Jerry winked and followed me to the window, where he was given bank-notes for the silver.

"Boy, Lady Luck was sure watching over you," I marveled as we reached the street.

"That wasn't luck," grinned Jerry. "I slickered 'em."

"Slickered them?"

"Sure."

"How?"

Jerry paused to take the bag of taffy from his pocket and drop it into a waste-box. Then he produced a handkerchief and carefully wiped his fingers.

"Didn't you notice that I had my left hand all messed up with taffy?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered. "But what's that got to do with it?"

"When I examined the dice," chuckled Jerry, "I was darned careful where I touched them with my sticky fingers. If you make one face of a dice good and sticky and then don't roll them too hard, the dice will stop with the sticky face down four times out of the five—especially on cloth like that was."

"Thunder!" I cried, beginning to see the light. "But what about that last roll?"

"That was kinda lucky," admitted Jerry. "The taffy didn't hold, and the deuce got away from me. But I got eight for a point—and that isn't a tough one to *(Please turn to page 118)*

IN TUNE WITH

Photo by Hal Phyfe

HELEN MORGAN

New York hates to admit it, but it's no less a fact that as a rule, typical New Yorkers were born out on Main Street. Even a name as symbolic of Broadway as Miss Morgan's appears on the christening records back home in Danville, Illinois.

It takes consummate artistry to fight one's way out of big choruses and night-clubs. Helen Morgan did it in a few short years. The night-club gave her her chance to sing solo—but not for long; the alert Flo Ziegfeld captured her for "Show-Boat," and to prove that he had found a star who could make a song through the sheer force of her captivating individualism, he sacrificed his gorgeous Ziegfeldian gestures to the severity of an ugly upright piano and a plain back drop. Now Arthur Hammerstein is starring her in "Sweet Adeline," the season's most outstanding musical success. She has not forgotten her small-town heritage—her voice with its crooning native quality stirs the bit of Main Street that is in all of us.

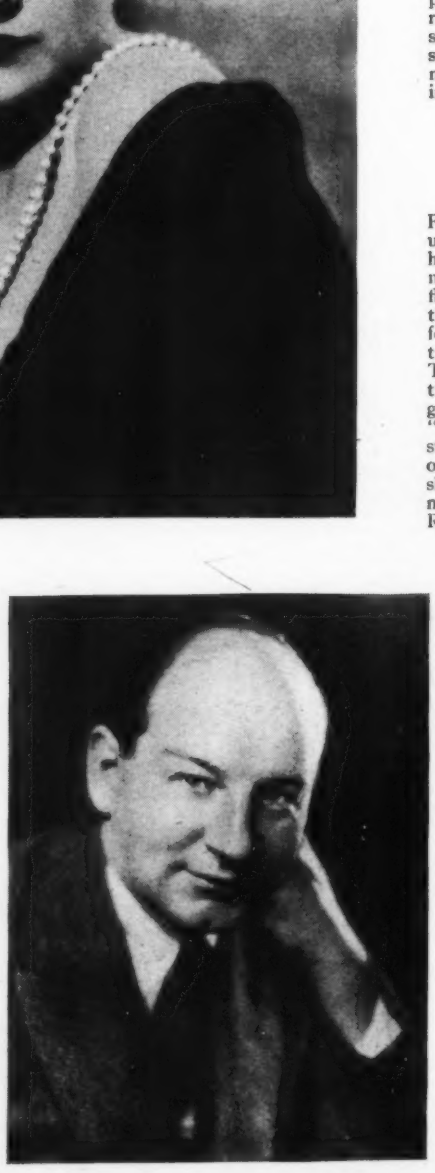
ERIC MARIA REMARQUÉ

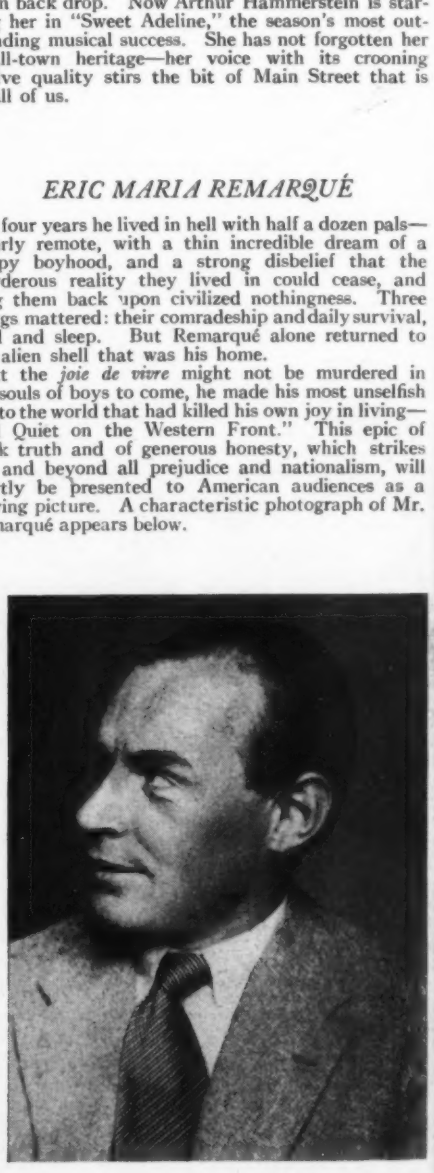
For four years he lived in hell with half a dozen pals—utterly remote, with a thin incredible dream of a happy boyhood, and a strong disbelief that the murderous reality they lived in could cease, and fling them back upon civilized nothingness. Three things mattered: their comradeship and daily survival, food and sleep. But Remarqué alone returned to the alien shell that was his home.

That the *joie de vivre* might not be murdered in the souls of boys to come, he made his most unselfish gift to the world that had killed his own joy in living—"All Quiet on the Western Front." This epic of stark truth and of generous honesty, which strikes out and beyond all prejudice and nationalism, will shortly be presented to American audiences as a moving picture. A characteristic photograph of Mr. Remarqué appears below.

ANTHONY H. G. FOKKER

at thirty-nine is one of the world's foremost aviation pioneers. At twenty he taught himself to fly in a machine he had built with his own hands, and with which he won the Russian Military Competition. At twenty-two, failing to interest his native country, Holland, or the British Government, in his airplanes, he accepted a contract offered him by the German Government, which tied him there throughout the war. Returning to Holland after the armistice, he built up a large European commercial air-fleet, and later, at the invitation of the American Government, he came to this country. Mr. Fokker was born on his father's plantation in Java; when he was six, his family moved to Holland. His schoolboy hatred of learning by rote, he declares, was the chief spur to his inventiveness.





OUR TIMES

LOIS MORAN

As a child in Pittsburgh, Miss Moran's ambition was divided between the piano, violin, dancing and acting. She chose dancing, and in her early teens won a place in the ballet of L'Opéra in Paris. But even that wasn't enough—not until a French producer sought her, offering the leading rôle in two pictures, did she find herself.

Turning her eyes toward home again on completion of the pictures, Miss Moran sent photographs of herself in answer to an American producer's advertisement. The response was a cable urging her to come immediately, which she did. There was no doubt on her arrival that she was the original of the photographs, and she was immediately signed up for the lead in "Stella Dallas."

The talkies provide a new outlet for the unusual intelligence behind her limpid eyes; and her very lucrative women's sport-shop in Hollywood has of late come to be recognized as a gay banner of the new in that effete town of make-believe. A recent photograph of lovely Lois Moran has been reproduced at the right.

PHYLLIS DUGANNE

has recently written some delightful short stories for the Redbook Magazine, which will appear in forthcoming issues.

Aside from tending her demanding young offspring Jane, Phyllis Duganne says she finds that life has been just one short story after another, with time off only once in her life to write a novel, "Prologue" —little Miss Jane at that time being too young to voice her questions.

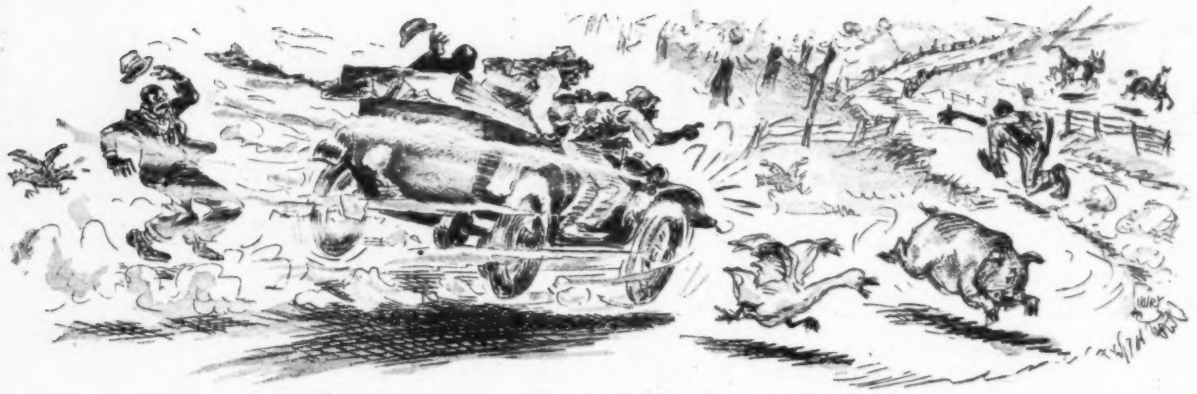
Despite her youth, Miss Duganne's writing life has been a long one, for she was largely brought up by the brilliant Irwins—Inez Hayes Irwin and her husband Will Irwin; and so she didn't have a chance to do anything but write.

Photo by E. L. Mix

BRAND WHITLOCK

Newspaper man, politician, novelist, lawyer and diplomat —from all these varied rôles Mr. Whitlock emerges as one of America's most distinguished men. His most recent literary work is his biography of Lafayette, a highly diverting narrative about the aristocratic liberal who exercised so great an influence, hitherto not wholly recognized, on the destiny of our country.

Mr. Whitlock was mayor of Toledo, Ohio, four times. Belgians appreciate him—more than we, perhaps. There is a boulevard in Brussels named after him, and a bust of him in the Senate Chamber. King Albert and the Belgian Parliament have conferred on him their highest honors—they haven't forgotten his courageous ministry when he served there as ambassador during the German invasion.



Willie's yells indicated that the benefits were in order.

Accidents à la Carte

A tale of consequences to the fact that Willie was both insured and insolvent

by Arthur K. Akers

Illustrated by Everett Lowry

EVERY time Shakespeare Shackelford, colored, saw Willie Freeman,—also colored,—he had to count ten to keep from committing murder. Shakespeare had loaned Willie fifteen hard-shot dollars, and collections had been poor ever since. Not even the first-mortgage Mr. Shackelford had taken on Mr. Freeman's bull fiddle helped. True, there had been a deep dark purpose about the loan: it had been for Willie to take a trip on. For when Willie was out of town he wasn't courting Shakespeare's newest girl, Beulah Simmons.

Willie had taken the trip—but on a round-trip basis. Hence Shakespeare had him right back on his hands.

Just now, too, Shakespeare was further handicapped in his hate by Willie's being in a new rôle—that of prospect for something else Shakespeare had to put over. In other words, "Knights of Temp'rance lodge heah is puttin' on new rank," Organizer Shackelford was elucidating to Willie. " 'Sides, de red un'fawm lookin' good on runt like you, dey's benefits you cain't dodge. Why, look heah, boy, whut you git when dat dray-wagon run over you dat time you wuz sleepin' too fur out in de street?"

Willie rubbed a knob-like head reflectively. A wheel had grazed it. Besides, he couldn't remember any benefits.

"Aint git nothin'," he confessed, in the dark as to Shakespeare's point.

"Well, is you member de new un'fawm rank, an' gits runned over dat way, you gits eighteem dollars sevumty-five cents benefits, an' dollar a week after dat fo' two weeks. How dat soun' to you?"

"Whut I do wid eighteem dollars an' sevumty-five cents?" queried Willie, who lived—under their protests—with his parents.

The question gave Shakespeare the desired opening. "Whut you *do* wid eighteem sevumty-five!" he exploded. "How 'bout payin' me wid hit, huh? How 'bout dat fifteem dollars I lends you? An' been runnin' garage fo' dat ol' bull fiddle of yourn ev' since!"

Willie obstinately raised other objections. "Maybe I aint git hurt," he brought up. "Den whut?"

"Ne' mind 'bout dat," Shakespeare interrupted grimly. "If you owes me fifteem dollars—an' got acc'dent benefits—you gits hurt all right. 'Sides, acc'dents cain't keep from happenin' to runtified boy whut gits seen too much round Beulah's house like you is. Ducktooth Carnes takin' notice up dat alley since he wife left him. Boy, when bigger benefits is payable, bigger acc'dents will happen to you, is all! Make yo' mahk right heah on dis cahd!"

"Aint got no money fo' de dues," Willie dragged out the discussion.

"I's done sunk fifteem dollars plumb out of sight in you now," countered Shakespeare testily. "Now I gwine 'nvest fo' bits mo' in yo' dues, an' stir up some chance of gittin' shet of dat bull fiddle—or you."

"Eighteem sevumty-five aint 'nough. Boy wid wife an' chillen cain't buy nothin' to eat long wid jes' dat."

"Dat somep'n else whut aint int'est you," retorted Shakespeare. "You gittin' out yo' class. Ma'ied man gits double 'demnity, de contrac' say. But dat aint got nothin' do wid you. You's single *now*, an' *keepin'* you single is whar I stahts shinin' an' you stahts stayin' 'way from Beulah's alley."

Ducktooth dozed, his muzzle-loader between his knees.

Willie felt like a travel tour—everything about his business was getting personally conducted by somebody else. And the only hope on his horizon was getting back his bull fiddle. Beulah liked music. And it cramped a boy's courting when he couldn't serenade his love on a bass viol from her potato patch. Weakly Willie made suitable marks at the

place on the card to which Shakespeare Shackelford was sternly pointing.

"*Now* you's member de un'fawm rank," was pronounced.

Willie was a total failure at looking happy. Not only had he no personal use for eighteen dollars and seventy-five cents, but even if he got it Shakespeare would take it away from him.

Then something took his mind off his difficulties with a bang. The bang was a real one and issued from the mouth of the ancient muzzle-loader owned by a famous marksman and jealous lover known locally as Ducktooth Carnes, who lived near by. Willie joined in the outbound rush early—and was one of the last to give way to curiosity and return. Yet he was in time for the public explanation of Mr. Carnes concerning the shot and the presence of a liver-colored darky among the upper branches of the nearest tall tree. Mr. Carnes had been dissatisfied, it seemed, with seeing the liver-colored one twice in the same day in Beulah's home alley. And when Ducktooth was dissatisfied he said it with fowling-pieces.

"Whar at you gwine, rich boy?" Beulah hailed him sweetly.

Then Willie saw something else that opened his eyes. Hardly had the smoke cleared away, the dust and echoes died, when a demonstration could be seen of the efficiency of the benefit team of the Knights of Temperance as exhibited in action during a membership campaign. In practically no time the lodge's adjusters were at the foot of the liver-colored one's tree, beseeching him to come down and have the shrapnel picked out of him, and sign a receipt for eighteen dollars and seventy-five cents cash benefits. Indeed, the sole delay was introduced by the liver-colored beneficiary, who declined to come down for many times eighteen dollars and seventy-five cents until Ducktooth should be farther out of range.

As though by design, Willie was given a front-row stand during the adjustment, Shakespeare at his elbow. An impression was bound to be made upon the new member.

"See dat?" indicated Shakespeare. "Dat li'l tree-climbin' boy aint b'long to de un'fawm rank but a week—an' look how he git suhvice."

"Sho git somep'n," agreed the slightly wall-eyed Willie unenthusiastically. "Whut brung on de waw?"

"Nothin' much," Shakespeare deprecated the mere cause of a great benefit. "He jes' hang 'round de wrong alley too much lately. Ducktooth aimin' to cut down comp'tition."

Willie's mind and eyes strayed nervously. Beulah had mentioned Mr. Carnes several times too often in her recent conversations anyhow. Adding everything together, Willie, who had once worked in the white folks' restaurant, wondered whether a boy who was insured under Shakespeare's scheme could arrange his accidents à la carte or had to take them table d'hôte.

Further checking his previous campaign plans against those involved in his new membership, Willie foresaw fresh calamities. A serious personal situation introduced itself, due to his being already heavily committed to a course of action that couldn't do anything but complicate his business now.

"Sho would like borrer back dat bull fiddle," he suggested mournfully. "Music kinder he'p me fo'git I j'ines de new place in de lodge."

"Only way you gits *yo'* hands on dat bull fiddle is crossin' *my* han' wid fifteem dollars," returned Shakespeare firmly.

With which ultimatum, he settled down where the wind was just right from the kitchen of a fried-fish stand and prepared to enjoy himself free. Willie, who couldn't stand smelling what he couldn't afford, passed on. But ere he passed far, a truck running down-grade backfired, and Willie took such steps as seemed necessary—four or five hundred of them.

Yet one desirable feature of his movements was that they took him toward the alley ornamented by Beulah Simmons. Beulah toiled little and spun less, but in the matter of fur, feathers and fixings, she had Solomon's lilies backed into a dark corner with a black cloth thrown over them. She also had a taste for music and cash money. And Willie had been making undeniable headway with her, based on a lot of things he had told her which he was now sadly realizing were not, and never had been, so.

Willie had merely been giving his imagination rein. As outlined to Beulah, right after a wedding in which she and Willie should be the star performers, there was to be a big fried-fish-and-watermelon wedding supper, followed by their departure on a passenger train for all the points North that Willie could recall the names of—plus several of his own invention. Naturally Willie had sounded rich and listened good to Beulah.

Yet, because other gentlemen were more apt to be attentive and greater givers of gifts if they didn't know too much, she had not mentioned these matters to Shakespeare and Ducktooth. Their presence and presents were still welcome to her. And this without regard to the severe strain that it placed Willie under.

Before he knew it now, Willie was right in front of Beulah's gate. Resolutely he joined the local Safety Council and marched past. Boys had been crippled for life before now through turning in at the right gate at the wrong time that way! Willie was doing fine until the siren called him. Then he followed precedent rather than prudence, and future events veered sharply toward a fresh climax.

"Whar at you gwine, rich boy?" Beulah hailed him sweetly.

Willie clutched a pawn-ticket and three cents, and wondered where she got the notion. Then he remembered with a falling feeling that she had it from him. He groaned, too, as he

In no time the lodge's adjusters were at the foot of the tree.

recalled Ducktooth in his recent rôle of one-man firing squad, followed by that immediate payment of benefits to his victim.

Yet with the groan and the thought came to Willie's mind the first faint dawnings of the way out. Dimly it appeared that things might yet be fixed up, if the infantry as exemplified by Ducktooth remained out of the field for a brief period.

"So busy thinkin' 'bout some money I's gwine collect I mos' run by you, honey-'lasses," lied Willie equally sweetly.

"You be sho an' stop in on yo' way *back*, den," urged Beulah practically and pointedly.

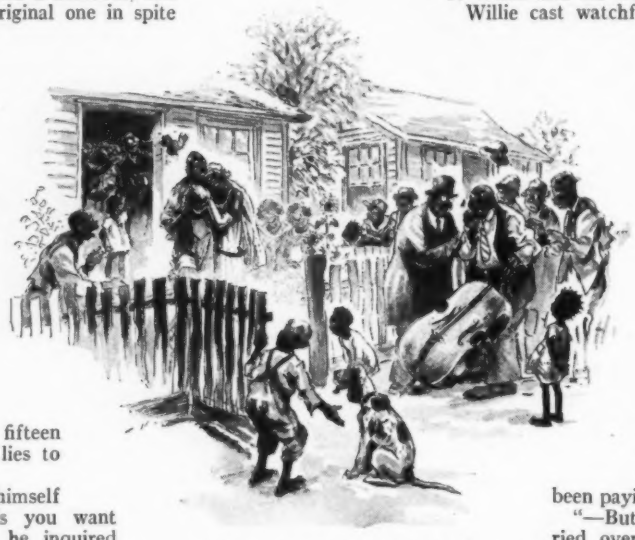
"Cain't pull dem deals dat fas'," demurred Willie. "Dis heah aint like collectin' fo' bits off a boy pay-day night. Talkin' big money. Women aint und'stand dat many dollar bills all talkin' at once."

"You fotch 'em heah an' I'll l'arn all de new numbers hit takes to count 'em," returned Beulah with heightened cheerfulness.

"Aint hit so!" muttered Willie to himself as he tore himself away. He had a heap of business to attend to from now on—part of it his own. His faintly forming brand-new scheme included Beulah and Ducktooth, and helped him to carry out his original one in spite of Shakespeare. But he was like the country boy on his way to town Saturday night to get drunk: in its details, gosh, how he dreaded it!

Willie gravitated toward Shakespeare. He felt closer to his bull fiddle then. But Shakespeare's look as he neared him made Willie shudder—kind of measuring a boy with his eye to see how he'd fit on a stretcher, was Willie's feeling under the scrutiny. A sort of "often in the ambulance but never a corpse," sensation.

Willie shivered and wished he hadn't borrowed the fifteen dollars. —And told so many lies to Beulah.



"Gimme rock! An' change dem benefits to death!" he adjured them.

Shakespeare didn't confine himself to appraising looks. "Boy, is you want home or hawspital acc'dent?" he inquired of the wabbling Willie.

Mr. Freeman vacillated horribly. Both feet were singing "Absent" to him, and he lacked fifteen dollars of being able to listen to them. His mouth stuttered, but his brain did nine years' work in the next sixty seconds. Willie thought of the rest of the way out while his lips were still tying themselves into a stammering knot. Beulah had some more of his business to attend to now! And she was in just the right relation to Ducktooth to fix it up, too. Far off, and for the first time, the birds sang ever so slightly for Willie.

He wiped the sweat of relief from his dark and furrowed brow and burst into language on the strength of it.

"Craves to git shot!" he startlingly announced. "Tell Ducktooth aim low an' go easy on de scrap iron in dat gun, but craves to git shot. Pins medals on de boys gits shot durin' de waw. Aint no medals fo' stoppin' bricks wid yo' haid."

Shakespeare responded to Willie's suggestion with discomfiting alacrity.

"Aint know nobody Ducktooth rather shoot dan you," he accepted the proposition.

Willie shuddered again at the definiteness the matter was assuming. Shakespeare was *too* obliging. When a boy craved service from Mr. Shackelford he was all too liable to get it. Yet the thought of it in its details gave Willie that uneasy feeling in the ankles again. The only thing, indeed, that kept him from seeking the freedom of the seas—in case any water should get in front of him—was the brilliant and completed idea that had so lately come to him concerning a way out for himself. A way involving the collection of benefits, redemption of the bull fiddle, marriage to Beulah, and full satisfaction of the honor of Ducktooth. He could explain to Beulah after the wedding about not having any money left for a wedding trip.

Meantime, everything Shakespeare said fitted Willie's scheme like a wet bathing-suit—and called for further conference with Beulah.

"You got dat money?" was her loving greeting when Willie had again carefully circumnavigated the block where Ducktooth dozed upon his sunny front stoop with his muzzle-loader between his knees.

"Honey, when you sees me gwine 'bout widout no truck follerin' me to tote hit in, dat means I aint got de money—*yit*," Willie explained his position. "But I's gittin' so close to hit now I c'n smell de ink on de bills."

Beulah's ears didn't miss a thing. The least she could hear sounded exactly like the first payment on a pair of tan shoes big enough and bright enough to tie Baptist Hill femininity into envious knots of gossipers.

"—An' all I needs is li'l he'p from gal whut sho would look good in pa'r dem new yaller shoes de sto' jes' got in," Willie confirmed it.

"Sho would hate to have nothin' but *you* 'tween me an' gwine b'arfoot in de wintertime," Beulah voiced skepticism of Willie and his works.

Willie cast watchful glances about for Shakespeare and Ducktooth. The only time women believed a boy was when it cost him money to talk.

"Gal whut fix up my business like I say," he broached his scheme to her, "gits to make a big squeak all round town in dem yaller shoes I's talkin' 'bout."

"Huccome 'fix up yo' business'?" questioned Beulah, led on by the prospect of an important sound being added to an imposing sight.

"I's fixin' git shot—"

"—Aint hit so!" interrupted Beulah with alarming certainty. "*Been* fixin' to, ever since you staht projeckin' round de alley whar at Mist' Shack'fohd an' Mist' Carnes been payin' dey 'tentions to me—"

"—But not like you thinks," Willie hurried over an unpleasant implication. "I gits me shot wid a blank."

"Mist' Ducktooth gin'ally loads wid ol' nails an' scrap iron, an' some li'l small gravel-rocks mix' in," reflected Beulah aloud.

"Yeah, an' dat whar at you—an' dem big shiny yaller shoes—comes in," Willie came to the point. "You git he gun long 'nough to take out all dem wrong things dat Ducktooth all time ram' down on top of too much powder."

"You sho aint *give* no shoes away," complained his love.

"I aint got no time to raise myse'f no new skin, neither," Willie defended his meticulousness on the subject of gunloadings. "An' I 'bleeged to git shot to collect my ben'fits from de un'fawm rank of de lodge. But hit make heap diff'ence to me whut *in* dat gun when hit happen. An' sho would he'p yo' looks b'low de ankles if dey wa'n't nothin' but powder in hit. Ol' lodge by-laws say is I git shot, I collects. Aint say nothin' 'bout shot whut wid. Dat whar at *I* do all de talkin'. Says wid blanks—an' you fix hit fo' me."

Meantime, with a temporary truce between him and Shakespeare patched up for business reasons, Mr. Carnes sat beside Mr. Shackelford and viewed the remains of a lard-can that had just been devastated by his charge of scrap. And viewing it, Mr. Carnes felt at least a first cousin to William Tell.

"Me an'-you gits in partnership," Shakespeare opened negotiations with him.

"*You* gits in hearse if you aint quit fo'gettin' dat Beulah my gal," Ducktooth sourly acknowledged the other's greeting.

"Dat's all right," Shakespeare passed over the peeve of Mr. Carnes. "Yo' real trouble aint *me* in co'tin' Beulah—hits dat Willie."

"Cain't git him in front of my sights good," apologized Mr. Carnes simply.

"Dat's done fixed now," Shakespeare reached the heart of the

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matter, and continued with the details, attractively and in full.

"Takes Willie firs'," agreed Ducktooth when all had been outlined to him.

"Leave de res' to me," Shakespeare closed the deal.

THE biggest trouble Willie found with getting his arrangements made was that it left him with more time to think. And he couldn't think without his mind getting mixed up in what was going to happen to him—what yet lay between him and the consummation of a most promising scheme. Promising in the best sense if Beulah secured possession of Ducktooth's gun and denatured its loads as outlined to her; but promising in a sense that Willie did not care to think about at all under any other conditions. Local gossip had it that that gun would shoot around a corner, too; and that when employed in love or war even broken glass had later been found embedded in Ducktooth's victims.

Pondering all which, Willie, pale-black and palpitant, presented himself where Shakespeare might stumble over him in a business way.

"Yo' acc'dent happen to you tomorrer mawnin', right after de cee-ment plant whistle blow," Shakespeare informed him presciently, on his discovery of him. "I done look in de lodge ben'fit treas'ry, an' hit say so. Dey's mo'n fifty dollars in dar. You c'n have de bull fiddle standin' right by de haid of yo' bed aft' de ben'fits pays me back dat fifteem bones you owes me, an' you aint got nothin' mo' to do but look at hit—an' git well."

African versions of Burns' "best laid plans o' mice and men" kept occurring alarmingly to Willie. Yet as long as Beulah had her mind on those yellow shoes she was liable to be reliable. So Willie swallowed and assented to the arrangement in a low unenthusiastic tone. Yet Shakespeare heard him all right because at the moment he had one large hand clasped lovingly about the back of Willie's neck while the other was doubled into a hamsized ball and vibrating threateningly in front of Willie's flat and frightened nose. Even black powder stung terrifically in large doses at close quarters. But it would enable a boy to claim benefits from being shot, on a technicality and without permanent injury.

Reassurance came hard to Willie for the rest of the day. All he saw of Beulah was at a distance. And grave doubts arose within him when he saw, afar off, a dray-wagon before Beulah's door. On closer inspection from behind near-by shrubbery the case grew more serious. A parlor organ was being unloaded at Beulah's home! Visions of twilight duets on organ and bull fiddle in the delightful future just beyond the accident, wavered and grew dim before the disconcerting thought—who was giving Beulah an organ? Would her loyalty to Willie's promised riches stand such a strain? Where were a lot of lies about yellow shoes, beside an actual organ? And vague assurances of a truck-load of money against the known fact that the technique and treasuries of widowers, such as Ducktooth, were of a superior order?

Willie suddenly had two pains where before he had had but one; preliminary shrinkings overcoming dermatological defects were met within him by qualms over the constancy of his true love after all. Which in turn might affect her thoroughness in the matter of removing the dangerous part of the contents of Ducktooth's gun-barrels. Violent tremblings of the concealing bushes followed, induced not by the wind but by Willie as he regarded his personal possibilities in the future.

Long Willie lay in the sheltering bushes that night while the sounds of organ music, played by ear by an amateur, floated from the home of Beulah. And shadowed from time to time on her "front room" window shades was the outline of the giver of the organ, Ducktooth. Any time Willie got tired of thinking about the organ he could think about the distances at which black powder fired in a business deal might set a boy's clothes on fire. Willie hated to carry his fire around with him that way.

Any newspapers that stated the condemned man ate an early and hearty breakfast were wrong in Willie's case. Willie had neither the price nor the appetite. A night of worry as to whether Beulah had attended to his gun-barrel business had destroyed the latter, and Shakespeare had attended long ago to the former.

Moreover, dawn is a poor time to receive bad news. And it was just at dawn when a message reached Willie from Beulah. It embodied the advice of Horace Greeley but took in more territory. Beulah left not only the West, but the North, South and East open to him. The big idea, according to Beulah, was absence; due to two things: her decision to marry Ducktooth, on account of the organ—and her inability to get hold of his weapon for revision of its loadings.

"They aint no class to bull fiddles nohow. And I aint told Ducktooth yit I is going to marry him becauz he is liable to back down on trunk he say he is going give me, if I tells him too much now—" ran Beulah's epistle by the hand of a small brother.

Willie immediately had but one use for doors—to pass out through them. Particularly his own. But in this instance the door merely opened to let him drive headlong into the arresting arms of Shakespeare, his creditor, bearing the mortgaged bull fiddle.

"You done run p-l-e-n-t-y," observed Mr. Shackelford into Willie's nearest ear. "Ol' whistle fixin' to blow. Ol' schedule all fix'. Ducktooth done find out 'bout you layin' in de bushes las' night waitin' fo' him to go home, an' put salt in de load fo' you, too. C'm on."

SHAKESPEARE continued to rehearse the horrible details as they went along. "All you does is kinder pass 'long de alley 'side Ducktooth's house," he explained. "Right aft' de big whistle blow. Ducktooth be out in de yahd shootin' at lahd-can stuck on li'l tree in front dat dirt bank in de yahd. Jes' as you pass, Ducktooth *miss de can.*"

Mr. Shackelford paused dramatically.

Large drops of ice-cold sweat gathered at various inconvenient places on Willie and rolled from him. Breathing grew difficult and locomotion more so.

"Lodge boys still givin' fast suhvice on de benefits," continued Shakespeare cheerfully. "Long as de memb'ship drive on, dey gwine give action. Why, you aint gwine more'n hit de ground befo' dem boys be reachin' in de treas'ry fo' de eighteem sevumty-five fo' you—an' me!"

Willie couldn't share his captor's enthusiasm. He couldn't even approach it. Not with Shakespeare chatting happily beside him: "Soon's you gits conscious an' signs de receipt, I leans de bull fiddle up 'gainst yo' baid an' takes fifteem dollars an' dollar int'rest from you. Dat still leave you two sevumty-five to spen' on yo'se'f nex' month when you begins to git 'round again on yo' crutches."

Just here Willie leaped straight into the air, and came down feeling of himself in vital places, to realize that his paroxysm of fright was premature. The sound which startled him had been merely one barrel of Ducktooth's gun, getting the range, so to speak. Lard-can and dirt bank had absorbed one charge; Willie was slated to absorb the next.

Imminence of disaster loomed darkly now. Willie had lost Beulah, and was liable to lose a leg next. Shakespeare was dropping back out of range and Willie was fixing to clear the mortgage on his bull fiddle by merely walking *by* Ducktooth's open gate. The rest was purely technical—and terrible.

Four palings left between Willie and the gate! Ducktooth took his eye and sights off the lard-can.

Two palings! Ducktooth was taking aim, but not at the lard-can. From the back of the block arose the first sounds of an organ in anguish.

Then, *Wh-oo-oo-oo-oo* — interrupted by *Cr-r-r-ash!* And from the ground arose further sounds of anguish. But not for long. The drifting cloud of smoke from Ducktooth's avenging weapon became but a small part of a far greater cloud which came from the wide-spaced places where Willie's feet contacted and spurned the earth.

WILLIE upset pedestrians. He upset fruit-stands. He upset the plans of Shakespeare, of Ducktooth, of the lodge benefit department. Panting in his wake, shortly after, despairing accident-claim adjusters, urged on by Shakespeare, abandoned feet for a flivver, and pursued him awheel. Willie's yells and the position of one hand clearly indicated that the benefits were in order. The problem of the adjusters was to effect settlement and secure a receipt without resorting to a car with more cylinders. Shakespeare rode with them on the running-board, as befitted a preferred creditor. High above the back seat projected the long stem of the collateral.

"Us bound cotch him on dat big hill to'a'ds Uniontown," stated Shakespeare grimly as a curve hid their quarry.

But Shakespeare was wrong. And as the chase drove on toward the east Willie doubled back through the woods and over the way he had come, with consequences far-reaching and startling.

Wearily a four-cylinder car with the flower of the Knights of Temperance accident-adjusters aboard it entered Demopolis from the east. Sun, gas and spirits were low. Sourly Shakespeare looked at the bull fiddle that represented an unsatisfied mortgage and creditor. He was making no time or progress toward either collection of his debt or pressing of his suit with Beulah. His sole satisfaction was the small one that Willie had outrun the car all the way into Selma, where the chase had been abandoned. And that an absent Willie was bound to help another suitor's chances—Shakespeare's, for instance—just that much.

But Fate had a wallop left for Shakespeare; a jolt awaited him in Hogan's Alley greater than he had yet dreamed of. For there on Beulah's steps, descending them toward a waiting though worn automobile, came obviously a bride and groom. Shakespeare groaned and realized that while he was absent on business Ducktooth had returned and double-crossed him by making hay while the sun shone. Shakespeare too had seen the entrance of the organ and dreaded this very effect from it.

Then, nearing the happy pair, his eyes opened and he besought aid of his associates.

"Gimme rock! An' change dem benefits to *death!*" he adjured them. "Tu'n yo' back twel I massacrees!. . . . Dat *Willie* nigger done live too long now! He done l'arned to fly jes' in time, 'ca'ze I's gwine make angel out him now! Gimme de bigges' rock out dar first—marryin' my gal, Beulah!"

But cooler heads prevailed. The bridal party were met at the gate by the adjusters. The bridegroom was both limp and limping. A large bandage about the outside of one trouser leg indicated the genuineness of his claim. Ducktooth's aim had been but partially up to form.

Behind them Shakespeare looked not only daggers but questions. Willie made his mark and accepted what he had been too hurried to wait for under the preceding circumstances. Shakespeare shouldered the adjusters aside and reached for the money, the bull fiddle in his other hand. But reach was all. Beulah clamped down on it first.

And all at once Willie remembered not only well but too much—with the result that he grew as nervous as a hen in heavy traffic. He had over-promised himself again, with the promisees all present. He had promised both Beulah and Shakespeare his accident benefits, and there had been only one accident—just half enough!

"Dis boy done promise me eighteem dollars fo' weddin' trip," Beulah cut in incisively upon his confusion. "Dat come firs'! Dat huccome I changes my mind an' marry Willie 'stead of Ducktooth. Bull fiddle lick de organ when I heahs Willie shot an' able to pay off!"

Willie mechanically began counting his roll—and brought on breath trouble. "Dis heah diff'ent," he stated thickly. "Benefit says gits eighteem dollars sevumty-five cents fo' gittin' shot. Dis roll got thirty-sevum dollars an' half in hit. Huccome?"

"E-zac'ly," agreed the head adjuster. "De by-laws says jes' dat—eighteem sevumty-five. But aint you ma'ied?"

Willie looked about uncertainly for his cue.

"He sho is!" Beulah supplied it in no uncertain tones. "On 'count of me knowin' he gwine git eighteem sevumty-five in real money right away."

"Well, den, Mist' Freeman, aint you 'member de by-laws also says, *'Ma'ied* men gits *double 'ndemnity'?"*

Willie gasped weakly. "F-f-fo'gits dat in de rush," he mumbled. Then, as Shakespeare hoisted the bull fiddle high for the fatal blow, the noblest thought of Willie's career befell him and arrested the downward sweep of the fatal fiddle.

"Promise' Beulah eighteem dollars," he stated. "Heah 'tis, gal—tell you all time I gwine be rich! An' *still* I aint busted: Shakespeare, heah yo' fifteem. An', Bull Fiddle—come to Papa!"

BREAK AWAY

(Continued from page 63)

There were days when they all seemed cruel—like the next day: In the afternoon she tried to sleep for a couple of hours. The nursemaid came in the afternoon, and Kate thought she could manage it. She might have been able to, if Jim and Josie had been agreeable to each other and not quite so clamorous. But it rained, and they had to stay indoors, where their interests were slight. First Josie cut her finger deeply and wailed; and an hour later, during the next nap Kate was stealing, Jim broke one of the posts on his bed. Kate knew she was mishandling it as she scolded him, knew it from his almost hostile eyes. "It's because I'm so tired," she thought. "It's because I'm so nervous."

The hairdresser came at six. It was more expensive to have her at the house than to go to the shop, but Kate felt that her weariness needed luxury. When her hair was done and she had been refreshed by a facial treatment, she could feel her energy rising again. Michael came home, looking as if his had already risen.

"You don't look tired, certainly," said Kate.

Michael laughed. "I stopped in at a Turkish bath this afternoon after lunch. And what do you suppose? I slept four hours straight."

Kate felt slightly dismayed. Four hours of a working day spent in a Turkish bath didn't seem entirely competent.

"Didn't they need you at the factory?"

"Oh, things are pretty slow," said Mike. "Our tiles don't seem to be the most popular articles in the world just now. I think I should have gone into a live business, like keeping a livery-stable."

"But those architects promised to use the tiles all through the new courthouse."

"They haven't done it yet."

"Aren't they going to?"

"They're acting a little skittish. Something's holding that contract up. I think one of the outside firms—maybe that Lamerry Tile Company from Chicago—has been getting in some of its usual fine work. Those birds don't care what they do."

"But can't you bring some pressure to bear on those architects? After all the fuss there's been about employing local men and local products? You know you've got grand tiles, and you can make delivery cheaper. Can't you insist?"

"Oh, sure," said Mike easily. "I can. I will. I was going to do it today. But I was half dead."

SHE wanted to tell him that he hadn't been up with the baby last night for two hours, but there seemed no way, short of common complaint, to bring that up.

"We ought to break away early tonight," she remarked instead.

"Sure we ought. But I don't know what you can do. If you're winning and somebody gets sunk, you can't smash up the rubber just because your feet go to sleep. You've got to be a good sport. You certainly are looking swell tonight, Katie."

He kissed her irrelevantly, and she sniffed.

"Have you begun already?"

"Oh, just a little shot to put some pep in me," he said. "I'd better hurry and get dressed."

MICHAEL seemed a little irresponsible tonight. Sometimes, after a drink or two, he got that way. And sometimes it sent a shiver of apprehension through Kate. For after all, they didn't have anything except what Michael made. Of course he had a good product. There was no reason in the world why they shouldn't have a modest fortune out of it if they could keep going while the tiles acquired a national reputation. But he had to be on the job all the time. The others couldn't do it without him. They were nice, inexperienced young fellows, but they always did what Mike wanted. It was his enterprise.

She was glad that they were going to the Ludlows' tonight, so that she wouldn't have to keep thinking about that courthouse contract. And after they arrived, it seemed so absurd to worry at all. There was an ease about the Ludlow entertaining which was very soothing. It was pleasant just to be in their house. People found new and pleasant qualities in their dinner companions because the food was so delicious.

The Merrills were not there, though they might have been. Blake and Ruth Warner were, and so were several other couples, as well as the McKinnons. Celeste and Alec fitted in many groups, just as Kate and Michael did. Of course everybody had known Alec when he was a bachelor, and after his marriage it was unavoidable that his wife should know all his friends. Sometimes Kate wondered if it was what Celeste had expected when she married Alec. She had been studying piano with an idea of going into concert work then. But in the last five years her musical talent had faded into a drawing-room one—taken out and aired at parties when other diversions were lacking or had grown stale. Celeste never refused to play. She drifted naturally to any piano. But she played less and less as if she thought anyone wanted to hear her, and she did not seem to practice at all. What little energy she had, seemed to be entirely used up in being agreeable company. Alec was having a slow time of it in the law, and Celeste wore her few dresses casually, as only a woman of grace and talent could, and spent her time making people like her.

She played for them after dinner tonight while the hostess made up the bridge-tables. Mrs. Ludlow was as careful about that as she was about her other arrangements. They were playing by families tonight. The Ludlows and McKinnons, Kate and Mike, with Ruth and Blake, and the other two couples, whose bridge was a trifle below par, at a table of their own.

The Warners and the Carrs were placed at a red morocco table in the library, with red-and-blue monogrammed cards in sealed packs lying ready for them.

"Well, do we clean them, Kate?" asked Michael.

"Absolutely," said Kate gayly. She meant it too. Ruth had another Paris purse with her tonight, and Kate didn't want or expect to put any checks into it.

"What are we playing for?"

"Half a cent?"

Kate thought it was too high and said so.

"Well, you girls play for what you like—the customary mill," said Blake, "and I'll take Mike on for a cent."

That was worse yet, thought Kate. They might both lose.

"All right. Make it a half all around," she said.

It was amazing how the cards ran and how Kate's good luck held. Ruth began to get a little edgy after the first two hours. She tried first the red cards and then the blues; she changed chairs; she sat on her handkerchief and pretended it was a joke. But nothing made any difference. Kate and Michael not only held them, but they bid them together. Their hands fitted. Michael went out on limbs again and again, and not one of them cracked.

About half-past twelve or a quarter of one he bid and made the small slam, doubled.

"This is beginning to run into money," said Grig Ludlow, picking up the score. He had come in to watch.

Kate knew it. But the stimulus had died out of her. She was beginning to get very tired.

"One more rubber," she said.

"We'll have to see about that," answered Blake, lifting a very yellow highball from the small table which a servant had placed at his elbow. Mike looked at Kate as if she'd said something she shouldn't, and she knew what his glance meant. When they were so far ahead, it wasn't for them to suggest quitting. She tried to convey in an answering glance that she hadn't had any sleep to speak of in three nights, but he was no longer looking at her. And the game went on.

IT had become very serious now. Bids considered carefully, passed back and forth. Deals passed. Kate felt as if her mind were clenched upon the fall of every card. It was such hard work, and she was driving her memory, which wanted to relax, which didn't want to remember discards or anything else vital.

"No—just plain ginger ale," she said to Grig, "with a lot of ice in it. And if you have some extra, put it on my head."

She wished Mike would realize that was a suggestion. He was drinking too much. He'd be heavy and dull tomorrow. He ought to know that. She played a hand brilliantly, mangled the next one, and Mike came to the rescue and won the rubber.

"Well," said Ruth, looking at a few figures embedded in diamonds on her wrist, "it's two o'clock. You settle for me, darling. I haven't that much money."

"Pay it to Mike," said Kate. "I haven't any purse. I'll take it all from him any-

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way when we get home. I'm going up to get my things."

"Want to play a few cold hands?" asked Mike.

"All right," said Blake.

RUTH had left her wrap downstairs; and Kate, going up, found Celeste McKinnon coming out of one of the bedrooms.

"Your music was nice tonight, Celeste," she said, for lack of any other comment.

Celeste turned on Kate her haggard eyes.

"I used to be able to play really," she said.

"But you still can!"

"It's ghastly," said Celeste. "I know it is. And so do you. But how can you play the piano without time or energy to practice? I'm always going to have some just the next day or the next week or the next winter or the next summer. But I never find it. I never will. We squeeze all the energy out of our lives. We'll all go home and reappear Saturday night at the dinner at the Hunter Club, and drink and dance and say the same things over until we eat scrambled eggs and bacon at four o'clock Sunday morning."

Kate patted her arm.

"Go home and get some sleep," she advised. "You're just a little low. We all get that way."

"But I stay low," answered Celeste bitterly.

Then she wrapped her coat around her with a graceful, languorous gesture, wiped the bitterness from her face with a smile and went downstairs.

Kate followed. Mike was still playing poker with Blake. She called to him across the room, and he signaled that he was coming. He and Blake seemed to be settling up. They were all saying good-night to the Ludlows. The usual adjectives—the same agreeable compliments—and the cars started.

"How much did we really win?" she asked Mike after they were home.

Mike pulled out a few small bills

"We broke about even."

"Even? We were miles ahead!"

"Blake and I played a few cold hands and just about squared off."

"You mean you lost all that money while I was upstairs? All that money we won at bridge?"

"Well, we didn't want to walk out with more than a hundred dollars, did we?"

"I did."

"Well, then I'll have to give you back what I lost for you."

"Don't be silly, Mike. It all comes out of one pocket. But after all that work, to have nothing to show for it!"

"I didn't know you were trying to earn a living tonight. You should have told me," he said with a touch of sarcasm.

"I wasn't. But the rest of them take what they win."

"Oh, with a killing like that, you've got to give them a chance to win it back."

"Yes," said Kate, "you can't leave when you're behind without being a poor sport. You can't leave when you're ahead without being a poor sport. If you don't want to play for a stake you can't 'afford, you're a poor sport—and if you win, you can't keep it without giving them a chance to win it back or you're one more kind of poor sport. What's the point of it all?"

"But it wasn't a business game," he explained, "just a little friendly game—that's all. We had a good time—nice dinner—good liquor—"

"And no sleep until half-past two o'clock."

"WELL, why don't you go and get some now?" he asked reasonably and yet with a touch of strain in his voice. "That's what I'd like to do."

"But you weren't up with the baby all last night. And you slept all afternoon in a Turkish bath."

"What if I did?"

"Well, I can't do things like that. And I don't see how you can carry on your business with any success from a Turkish bath—or at the rate you're drinking highballs."

"Or with the encouragement I get from my wife," he added. "Well, I don't know what this is all about."

"Oh, I'm just tired," she said, with a break in her voice.

"Then go to bed!"

But even in bed she lay prickling with irritations. She was sure that even if she had seemed unreasonable she was fundamentally reasonable. Michael wasn't sympathetic. That was the trouble in being married to him. And as she drifted off to sleep the thought of the courthouse contract tangled with her last arguments.

IT was that odd pain in her back that bothered her. And the tight bands of pain in her head. She didn't tell Michael about them. She didn't want to bother him, especially after that mess over the tiles for the new courthouse. He had lost that contract. Old Mr. Harrison had said that if Mike had come to him in time, it never would have happened. But after the award was made, on the day of the Ludlow party, there was no getting around the decision without stirring up a mess and perhaps some lawsuits that might not help anyone. They all said that no outside firm would ever again put over anything like that. But that did not help the Carrs.

Mike seemed to be waiting for Kate to say something about it. He had been almost hostile.

"But Mike," she said, "what will you do?"

"Oh, we'll have to get three times as many small jobs, that's all," he said, and added, "or not."

Sometimes he was like that—sullen.

They had gone to the movies with the Merrills, that night—the second show—and back afterwards to the Merrill house. In the course of the evening Mike had grown much more cheerful. But it wasn't going to help financially if Mike was charming and cheerful in the evening when there was no money to be made, at the expense of being entirely different in the daytime. Kate was worried about him. And about herself. There must be something wrong with her head. It couldn't ache like that unless there was something wrong. She began to vision operations. Operations on the head were almost always fatal.

But the doctor said there was nothing wrong. She had gone to his office without telling anyone, and waited for an hour and a half while other men and women with haunted eyes went in ahead of her. Finally he saw her and listened to her description.

"You're probably a little nervous," he said.

She tried to explain how very bad it was, but he still seemed unalarmed. He examined her. Chest, heart, blood-count—all normal.

"You're in good shape, Mrs. Carr," he told her. "I think the headache is just nerves, and the pain in your back can be explained in much the same way." He told her some things about the nervous system and added: "Perhaps you haven't been getting enough sleep."

Kate told him how that was.

"You see," he said, "the kind of fatigue you are undergoing is caused by factors outside of my control, and I presume more or less in your control. Of course I might send you to a hospital for a rest, but I'm not sure that is more than temporary help."

"That isn't necessary, if nothing is wrong with me."

"It may not be now, but long-continued fatigue brings a good many functional disturbances in time," said the doctor.

Still he didn't care. He didn't think she was an important case. She went out of his office, with a prescription for a mild sedative in her purse, and a few suggestions, and felt rather ashamed of having been so concerned over herself. She had the prescription filled. Tonight when she was going to bed, she would have some of it. Not at eight o'clock as the label said, because they were going to the McKinnons' for dinner and bridge, and she'd be no good at all if she had any dope beforehand. She bought a magazine and a new shade of rouge, a sweater for Jim and a half-dozen new feeding bottles for Micky. He was developing a new habit of breaking them which was disturbing—he threw them over the side of the crib to hear the crash. By the time she got back to her house, she knew she had only a little more than an hour before she must dress.

She had tried to back out of this party tonight, but Michael had wanted to go. He liked Alec and always had a good time at the McKinnons'.

"Come on. Be a good sport," he had said to Kate.

She hated not to be. Of course if the doctor had found anything wrong, it would be different, but now that he hadn't, there was really no excuse.

It was not the cook's night out, so she was giving the children their supper. A wail and rather angry children's voices were coming from the direction of the kitchen, but Kate went upstairs. Just for the moment she didn't even want to see her children, or hear them. She adored them, of course. She had found out how much once or twice when they had been sick. But this was one of the times when they seemed to be trying to make things harder, and her head had begun to ache again.

She closed her door, put on a negligee and lay down on the *chaise-longue*. Relaxation was one of the things the doctor had suggested, but it did not seem to come. She picked up the magazine she had bought and turned over the pages. A personal article about an actress whom she had always liked, signed by another distinguished name, caught her eye. This would be genuine information, not publicity stuff. She began to read.

She read for five minutes, and then her atttention seemed fixed. She was reading one paragraph over and over.

"Of course Elinor Eustis has hundreds of warm friends, and it is remarkable that she has kept their devotion when she sees so little of most of them. There are few women who enjoy gayety as she does or can add as much to it in an unforced, completely natural manner. But those who see her at a party always try to talk to her before midnight, because about that time—often before, but surely not later—Miss Eustis will invariably go home. It is one of her habits which indicates how great a responsibility she feels her work to be. As she says, she can't stay up all night. Her work is too important. So, with her usual completeness of decision, she doesn't."

THAT was all Kate read. Her mind seemed to go off at a tangent from Elinor Eustis as she read that phrase "important work." She felt vaguely as if she were personally insulted. "How about my work?" she wanted to ask almost anyone. "It's just as important as what she's doing." She felt, with the conviction that so luckily comes to married women every now and then, that nothing else in the world compared in importance with the work of trying to form the lives of other people. Three children and a husband. That job took talent if you did it well. It took sleep too—and strength.

She heard Mike come upstairs. His very step sounded discouraged tonight. It was all wrong. He was young; he was really competent; he had a good product to sell. She could make him see that too, if she were feeling normal and he was. She used to do it. She got up and started to dress.

There were eight people at the McKinnons'.

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AREN'T you ashamed of yourself? An honest bar of Fels-Naptha Soap resorting to such methods! Slipping into a Christmas magazine disguised as Santa Claus!

What place have you in a magazine full of Christmas presents? We hope you're not venturing to suggest yourself as a "practical gift for any woman." You know as well as we do that women who have to be practical for eleven and seven-eighths months out of every twelve crave frivolities at Christmas—and bless their hearts, they deserve them!

Ye-es, of course we know that you could be particularly useful while they're *having* to be practical—getting ready for the holiday, and cleaning up afterward. Your good golden soap and plentiful naptha, working together, do give *extra* help with every soap-and-water task. *Extra* help that saves a woman's strength. Yes, we admit all that.

But—soap for a woman's Christmas gift! Even Fels-Naptha Soap! . . . No, we're all for silk stockings, or an amethyst ring, or—

What's that? Don't hang your head—speak up!. . . You weren't suggesting yourself for the woman of the house? You think *washing machines* deserve Christmas presents, too? Ah, now we see what you're getting at! You believe you should be on hand to help every washing machine with the first after-Christmas wash—to help it give its owner a whiter, cleaner, sweeter wash than ever before?

That's an excellent idea. . . Put the whiskers on again, if you like, and go back to the top of the page. You have our blessing. And just to show that we're in the spirit of the thing, we're adding a little gift of our own—to be sent to any woman who'll take a minute off between shopping trips to write for it.

She'll find excellent use for it whether she uses a washing machine or not—and it goes to her with our best wishes for an easier New Year. Merry Christmas!

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Just two tables of bridge. They lingered a long while over the dinner-table. Celeste did things beautifully. There was an atmosphere about her dinners, simple as they were, which made them distinguished. If she only had a little more vitality, thought Kate, looking at her, she would be delightful.

IT was late when they started to play bridge, for after dinner Celeste had gone to the piano with rather more interest than usual. She tried some modern music that was unfamiliar to Kate. They were things she had never quite perfected, she explained. She was going to get to work on them as soon as she could. She said it automatically but without much expectation, and finally left the piano for the bridge-table.

Kate played bridge with John Merrill, and Blake and Celeste took them on.

"What are we playing for?" asked Blake.

"A tenth," said Kate.

"Better make it a quarter."

"A tenth's my limit," insisted Kate.

"And mine," said Celeste, backing her up.

The score went up and down and finally began to show a growing loss for Kate and John. They cut for new partners. Kate still lost. The first glass of water came in. The first round of soft and hard drinks appeared. The first ash tray was carelessly emptied on the hearth. The room began to lose its charm and become one more rather smoky place to play cards and drink. And a chime clock on Celeste's mantel struck eleven-thirty.

"Well," said Kate, "I guess that's all for me tonight."

They all looked at her.

"What's the matter?"

"Not a thing in the world except that I want to get to bed by twelve."

"But we haven't finished the rubber."

"Well," said Kate, "we finished a lot of other rubbers."

"Your luck will turn," said Blake cheerfully.

"Not tonight it wont. Because there isn't going to be any more of it. Good night, everybody."

From the other table Mike heard vaguely what was going on. He was meditating a bid—a long, saffron-colored drink beside him.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "It's early."

"It will be midnight by the time we get home."

"Doing a Cinderella?" asked Helen.

"A more or less permanent Cinderella."

Alec stood up and came over. "Didn't they treat you right? Aren't you having a good time?"

"I've had an especially good time. It was the best dinner I've had in months. If I could ever get shrimps to taste so clean, I'd be a proud woman! And your music, Celeste, was nicest of all."

"I'm glad."

Kate spoke to Celeste by herself.

"You don't mind if I go home? It's just because it's been such a good party that I want to go home while I'm not too tired to enjoy it."

"Go along," Celeste encouraged her. "I hate all these endurance-tests too. I think perhaps I'll break away myself before long."

"Why don't you?"

"Maybe I will. I wish I had your nerve. You've started something anyway, Kate."

KATE didn't quite know what she had started. Alec McKinnon looked a little insulted and sounded cold as she said good-night to him, and the Merrills were silently but clearly of the opinion that she was leaving because she was losing. As for Michael, she couldn't tell what he thought. He was probably sulking again. But she didn't care for the moment. It was such fun to feel her life in her own hands again, to feel her hands on its controls, to know its power. It wouldn't be so hard to steer it.

Not hard at all. They were just going out of the garage when Michael spoke.

"Well, maybe you're right, Katie," he said. "Early to bed. You know what the saying is."

And he might have thought of it first, from his manner as he kissed her in that husbandly, protective way.

A LADY ASKED IT

(Continued from page 49)

menace is removed via a shutter. Hardly a season's gone by without the Clayborne game providing me with a splint job.

On second thought the coach pulls Flinger, but there's no bolt in Bolton without the big boy. Fuzzy forwards hurled by our other backs are either grounded or intercepted, but nevertheless we keep trying 'em, a passing game being our only possible offense. The Clayborne line's much too opaque for the feeble rush-light we shed to get through. We manage to keep the opposish in its own territory, however, and the half ends with the score 13 to 0.

"Why aint you lettin' me play no more?" grouches Cole in the rub-down room. "Aint I been doin' good?"

"You were great," returns Heffernan, "but I kind of figured a little rest wouldn't do you no harm."

"Rest!" howls Flinger. "You think I take a rest down home after throwin' two or three cantaloupes? Hell, I've thrown a thousand of 'em a day without stoppin' for no lunch, even."

"Be of good cheer," says I soothingly. "You'll probably be back in there before the fiesta's over."

"Yeh," growls Cole, "but I want to be there all the time. How are these folks goin' to know I'm a football hero 'less they see a right smart of me?"

Notwithstanding which, Bolton takes the field for the second session without the young man, Heffernan having decided not to risk the Clayborne bone-breakers except in case of extreme emergency. And in due course the emergency arrives.

WE'RE not so bad in the third quarter, but in the fourth the pounded line goes to pieces and Clayborne stages a parade. Ten yards through center, twenty-five off tackle, another twenty through the middle, a scramble under the posts, a kicked goal and the score's 13 to 7.

Within two minutes Clayborne again has the ball in the middle of the field and is again marching toward the bacon with practically no opposition. First downs follow first downs without a break, and seven points are added to the enemy's score in jazz time. We're now a point behind, with hardly enough of the game left to walk the length of the field and back.

"Flinger!" snaps Heffernan.

"Kind of late, isn't it?" I suggests brilliantly.

"Flinger!" yells Red, and gesticulates frantically. Cole drops his sweater and rather leisurely walks up to the coach.

"Want that I should be a hero now, eh?" he growls, sarcastic.

"Get out there, you big lummox," howls Heffernan, "or I'll bend a goal-post over your dome."

CLAYBORNE kicks off and the ball happens to go to Flinger. Shaking two or three tacklers from him and dragging another, he manages to carry the oval to the center of the field, where he's caved in under a bulk of beef. A flash off tackle nets us a few yards and a huddle follows. There can't be more than a minute left of the set-to.

Bolton spreads out in kick formation. As the ball's snapped back, Haley gets away free and clear at the left end and burns it up down the gridiron. With the pill in his mitts Flinger runs back a bit, hesitates a moment or two and lets fly just as the angry mob is about to fall on him.

There never was anything like that heave. Straight toward the goal-posts fifty yards away shoots the ball, high over the head of the hot-footing Haley. By inches it floats over the cross-bars and into the upraised hands of the Bolton left end. A split-second later the whistle blows, ending the game.

"The greatest ever," I remarks to Cole, after freeing him from the milling mob and getting him to training-quarters.

"Huh," grunts Flinger. "I've thrown Rocky Fords straighter and farther. The girls seen it, didn't they?"

The girls seen it, all right, and Swasey's seen to the girls. As the kid emerges from the gym, a bevy of beauts surround him with *oh's* and *ah's* and smiles you could smear on batter-cakes. I notices among 'em a cute little trick with yellow hair. So does Cole.

"Why aint you never talked to me afore?" he asks her.

"I guess I was too bashful," she titters.

"That's all right," says the big hick grandly. "John Barrymore has the same trouble."

THE following Saturday we slips Stonebridge the latter end of a twenty to nix count, Flinger and Haley just playing beanbag with the opposition. The left end never had been any great shakes in previous seasons and probably is no devastating tremor now, but the ball's planked so accurately into his mitts that he'd have to turn his back and read a book to miss 'em. And Flinger wouldn't care if he did miss one occasionally.

"You'd think he was the hero instead of me," grumbles Cole. "The papers is full of him, and them touchdowns—"

"That's a laugh," says I. "The whole world and Aunt Sophie Kluts know that you're the power behind the thrown. Did anybody tell you you were being picked for the All-American team?"

"What's that?" asks Flinger.

"It's a sort of player-of-the-month club," I explains. "You've got to be the best journeyman at your position in the country to make it. Every four years they go to Washington and play the Electoral College for the stirrup cup."

"I don't care nothin' about that," scowls Cole. "I want all that's comin' to me, and I aint gettin' it. Think I'm goin' to heave my head off to put medals on another guy's chest?"

"Be yourself," says I. "Flora Burgess isn't pinning any decorations on Haley's coat, is she?" Flora's the little blonde chick Flinger's been majoring in since the Clayborne game.

"I aint so sure she aint," mutters Cole. "I seen her out walkin' with him last night. You fellers got to do somethin'—"

"Leave it to me," I cuts in, "and I'll have your statue in Trafalgar Square in place of Nelson's."

"Never mind Nelson," grunts Flinger. "He don't bother me none."

"Red." says I, when I sees the coach later in the day, "is it necessary that all the forward passes be shot at Haley?"

"Why not?" he comes back. "It's a great combination, isn't it?"

"Yeh," I returns, "but I'm afraid the great combination's beginning to grate. The big boy's getting all hot and hostile over the hallelujahs Jed Haley's stirring up."

"What about his own helping of hallelujahs?" demands Heffernan.

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"Not enough," says I, "according to the way he reads Genesis. After all, you must admit it's the guy who pushes over the touchdowns who gets the white meat of the hosannah hen. Can't you have a few of those cantaloupes flung at Irwin et al.?"

"No," snaps the coach. "Irwin isn't fast enough to outspeed a stalled freight, and that also goes for *et al.* Flinger'll have to like it as is."

"Watch your step," I cautions, "or rather his. Remember, you can't handle this baby on the basis of college spirit, or the team's the thing. Cole thinks he's a hero waltzing with glory, and he don't propose to let anyone cut in on the dance, either, if he can help it."

"Well, he can't," says Heffernan. "Suppose he were to gum the works—how'd that help him?"

"I don't know," I admits, "nor does he know—that or anything else; but a gal's mixed up in this, and that's dynamite under any system of accounting. It just happens that both he and Haley are tuning up their lutes on the same side of the street."

"Bah," shrugs Red. "You're just making a mountain out of a moth-ball. The gal'll keep him going good if nothing else will. Watch him work at Cloverdale Aggie."

ON Saturday it does begin to look as if I'd made a fire out of a lot of smoke. The kid's silent and grouchy, but there's no let-down in his work. He heaves 'em as well as he ever did, and before the first half's over, Haley's manufactured the boy friend's raw material into a couple of touchdowns. So far, all's in accordance with the usual routine.

At the very close of the game, however, there's a hitch. Bolton's in open formation on its own twenty-yard line. The ball's snapped to Flinger for a forward, but there's no forward forthcoming. Instead Cole tucks the oval under his arm and starts around the right end. The team, having been crossed, has of course no effective interference for him, and he's downed with hardly the gain of a yard. Angrily Heffernan motions him from the line-up and sends in a sub.

"What's the matter?" asks the coach. "Get your signals mixed?"

"No, I didn't get no signals mixed," comes back Flinger sullenly. "Aint I never got no right to run with the ball?"

"You got no right to do anything," snaps Red, "unless I give you the right. You know what you're out there to do and you do it."

"Sure," sneers Cole. "Just so long as you make it nice and easy for Haley, you don't—"

"Beat it to the gym," snarls Heffernan.

"Not so good," says I, when the boy shuffles away. "Why rough him up, with the big game only a week from today?"

"Because," returns Red, "I propose to handle that game my way, not his. Just the same," he adds thoughtfully, "I'd hate to see him run out on us. See what you can do about smoothing down his feathers. You talk his language."

Perhaps I do, but I can see no gain in rewarming the last can of soft soap I'd dished out to him. However, another idea strikes me, and that evening I hunts up Swasey.

"You know Flora Burgess very well?" I inquires.

"Sure," he replies. "What do you want—her hand in marriage?"

"Not that I've heard of," says I, "but I do want her to take her hand out of a mess. We're going to call on her tonight."

"We are!" exclaims Slats. "What for?"

"To get her recipe for peanut brittle," I tells him impatiently. "There's a guy I don't know who doesn't want it. Come on."

THE Burgess gal's on the porch of her sorority house entertaining a young man, and at no great distance, when we arrives. It's none other than our dashing left end Jed Haley.

"On your way!" I barks fiercely at the boy. "What're you doing out after nine bells?"

"O. K., Mike," he grins, and departs.

"You two out on a snooping expedition?" inquires the vest-pocket blonde with her nose in a sniff.

"More of a fishing expedition," says I. "Do you particularly care whether we win or lose next Saturday?"

"My, oh my," she murmurs. "Does keeping one member of the squad out a little beyond his bedtime create such a query?"

"It does," I returns, "when it's the wrong member of the squad."

"Wrong member?" repeats Flora with a puzzled pucker of the brow.

"Yeh," says I. "I'd have thought much more of our chances against Braxton if I'd found Cole Flinger here tonight instead of—"

"Well, I declare," she flares. "Can't I—"

"Keep your lip-stick on," I cuts in. "If it wasn't for Flinger, we wouldn't have won a heat this year. Right now he's all grouched up over you and Haley, and he's gone sour on us just when we need him most. He's sore enough to leave Bolton flat and beat it back to his cantaloupe mine."

"I asked you to be nice to him," remarks Swasey, reproachfully.

"I have been," asserts Flora, "but—"

"You have been," I admits, "but the trouble is you've split your niceness too many ways. Flinger's got the hero twist between his ears, and only undivided worship'll satisfy the floggen-head. At the moment he has the idea that you and the rest of the world, including the Scandinavians and the left-handed Latvians, are all a-gaga over Haley, because the Bolton touchdowns are in his name. You can get him out of it, though."

"How?" asks the Burgess baby as if she didn't know.

"Coo him off the Christmas tree all next week," I answers. "Flatter the rube out of his rubbers. Tell him his forward passes must have come down from heaven in a golden chariot with emerald wheels. Tell him anything. Tell him nothing at all. Just look at him that way."

"What way?" she inquires, her big blues wide open.

"Your way," says I.

FLORA plays ball. In the following week I see her often about the campus with Flinger, gazing up at the big hick as if he were an Alp and she a goggle-eyed tourist in the valley. However, the frill still manages to find time for Haley, who's apparently her white-haired boy.

"You want him to be bright and cheerful too, don't you?" says she when I happens to meet up with her and the end man.

"Oh, sure," I returns; "but remember, girlie, Jed's only an incident, while Flinger's an event. The boy's perked up considerable in practice, and I want you to keep the good work going."

"I will," promises Miss Burgess. "I may not be exactly willing to die for dear old Bolton, but I'm willing to lie for her. By the way, how do you think I'd look on a cantaloupe farm?"

"I don't know," says I, "but I imagine you'd come under the head of farm relief."

At any rate she's brought me relief. Having fetched Flinger from the flats of Colorado, I sort of feel responsible for the kid, and it's a pleasure to see him again heaving a ball around the field as if he liked to. Heffernan's brow loses a few furrows, as well.

"The boy's better than ever," he remarks to me toward the end of the week. "You must have smeared him with a fine line of salve to bring him around to where he is."

"You know me," says I modestly. "The big balm man from Gilead. Putting any dough up on the game?"

"Five hundred iron men," returns Red. "Want a piece?"

"Yeh," says I. "Bet for me the bonus I'm going to get for delivering Flinger and renovating him. . . . . Don't kid yourself, though, on an easy cash-in. Braxton's going to take a lot of beating."

And such, on Saturday, turns out to be the case. Not only is the visiting eleven bigger and faster than ours, but there's been plenty of time to prep for Flinger's forwards. Cole does manage to get off several long ones in the early part of the game, but they're either intercepted, or Haley's hauled down after comparatively short runs.

AS a matter of fact, Flinger does his best work for us in the first half, playing a defensive guard. With his bull strength and enormous reach, he tears through the Braxton line, upsetting runners before they're fairly started and busting up formations while they're still starting. At the recess the score's nothing to nothing in favor of nobody.

On the way to the gym we pass by the section of the stands occupied by the Bolton rooters, and in the first row I spots Flora Burgess. As Haley approaches, she leans over and pats him on the back.

"A touchdown—for me," I hears her whisper.

So apparently does Flinger. His face darkens, and his teeth clamp together, but he says nothing till he gets to the rub-room. Then he turns loose on the left end.

"What the hell's the use of throwin' 'em to you?" he snarls. "You don't know what to do with the ball when you get it. I suppose," he adds, sarcastic, "I'll have to pass 'em after this, catch 'em and run with 'em. Swell chance she has of getting a touchdown out of you!"

Jed comes back with a fast one, and the two go to it in the choicest collegiate billingsgate until Heffernan finally forces 'em to shush. However, they're still glaring curses at each other when the team steps out to resume play.

In the third quarter Braxton picks up three points on a placement kick, and it's cold turkey for us to come across with something quick. A beautiful fifty-yard heave from Flinger to the goal-posts has all the ear-marks of a pay-off, but Jed fumbles the catch, and it's not until the closing moments of the last period that we get another chance.

We're far back in our own territory when the final fireworks are set off. On a phony forward, Cole crashes his huge bulk through the Braxton beef, gets clear and isn't smeared until the enemy's fifteen-yard marker's reached. The kid's apparently out on his own. On the next play he crosses the boys with an attack on center and plants the pill on the two-yard line.

There Braxton holds. Two downs net us not even inches. An attempt at end goes all wrong, and we're thrown for a loss, the fourth down finding us back on the ten-yard line and the referee reaching for his whistle. Only one possible chance to score remains.

Flinger steps back for the pass. He takes the ball cleanly, but instead of whipping it over to the waiting Haley, he tosses high into the still air, fully forty feet above and over the cross-bar. A sucker heave! Just a gamble on a scramble!

Instead of following the pigskin, my eyes, for some reason, remain fixed on Cole. I sees him charge into the tangle like a wild bull, hurling man after man out of his path while frantic hands are straining upward. Suddenly he leaps high, and the next thing I know, the ball's in his hamlike hands! The big yokel had caught his own forward pass!

"Of all the crazy stunts," remarks Heffernan when the panic's subsided some. "Where did you—"

"A lady," cuts in Flinger with a sappy grin, "asked for a touchdown, so I thought *I'd* give it to her!"

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LOST LOVE SONG

(Continued from page 31)

straight coif that framed her creamy oval face in a half moon of gold.

"If it only had words!" she thought. "Well—why not?"

She sat quiet for a long moment, staring out into the black grayness of the rain. Her mind began to fill with phrases, words that rhymed and didn't rhyme—her hands felt very gently for the first line of the theme, and the words fitted themselves into it like fingers into a glove:

Little lost love song
Out in the night;
Poor little melody,
I heard you call
As you wandered along,
I knew you were hunting for me—

The blood began to creep up into her creamy cheeks as she bent to the construction of the verse and chorus. And so engrossed was she with the new-found joy of creation, that she did not heed the presence of a large, foreign-looking gentleman in a raincoat who was leaning over the counter watching her and listening.

"Sister," he said at length in a thickly accented voice, "vot vas dat last number you vas playink?"

Erminie strove to collect her thoughts.

"The—the last number? I think it must have been 'Roses in June.'" She reached for a copy and opened it.

"No, no—" He waved it aside with a diamond-glinting hand. "I mean the number you been woiking on while I been standing here. Vot is it? Somet'ing about a 'Lost Love Song,' aint it?"

Erminie was quivering.

"Did—did you like it?" she ventured.

"Sure I liked it; it's a snappy number. Sweet, but not too sweet. Aint sticky like a ballad, and yet it's got good rhythm. Play it in fox-trot time, and it would make a swell tap-dance number."

Erminie beamed upon him.

"I'm sorry you can't buy it—yet," she told him, "in fact, it hasn't been published."

"Not—published yet?" His black eyes considered her for a moment. "Who wrote it?"

"I—I don't know." She was aware how inane the answer must seem, so she hurried on: "I heard it."

"You hoid it? Den maybe it's published after all?"

"No, I'm sure that it isn't. In fact, I am certain that I heard it the very night it was composed."

"Uh-huh; vell, dat's too bad. But if it aint out, I guess I can't buy a copy."

"I'm sorry—anything else, sir?"

"No, not'ing else."

Solomon Herzog entered under a dripping umbrella as the door closed on the would-be customer.

"That was Luveitz," he said, looking after him, "and I'm betting he didn't spend any money."

Erminie was alert to the sound of the name.

"Luveitz the theatrical producer?" she said breathlessly.

"That's him; a good showman, but as slippery as that street. If he ever asks for credit, he don't get it here!"

Hastily Erminie told him of the song and the unknown composer. He listened in silence, heard the melody as Erminie played it, and nodded his head vigorously. "It's good," was his decision; "and if you want to save it from Luveitz, get it to the copyright office at Washington as soon as God and the air mail will let you!"

ERMINIE hurried home that night in such a whirl of emotion that she did not heed the almost horizontal drive of the rain, or the cold whipping wind from the north. She climbed the two flights of narrow stairs amid the usual medley of instrumental and vocal music. But when she knocked at the door by the second landing, there was silence within. She knocked again, peremptorily; and yet again. But there was no answer to her summons.

SHE went slowly up the last flight of stairs to her own apartment. She looked eagerly for a light in the window below her. But the rectangle maintained a dark, unresponsive stare.

She wandered restlessly about the apartment, oscillating between the piano and the window, feeding the tiny fireplace with wood and coal until with a short laugh she took herself in hand and forced a calmness that she did not feel.

To occupy her time she took from her father's old music case some sheets of manuscript paper and seated herself at the table under the reading lamp.

"Lost Love Song," she wrote at the top. "Words by Erminie Swazlow. Music by—" she paused, sighing. How stupid of her, all these weeks, not to have learned his name! It had been like living in a fairy tale to think of him as an enchanted, invisible prince. She bent over the manuscript determinedly. "Copyright applied for."

Two hours later she finished the complete harmonization of the song. It was long after midnight. And still the window below her was dark. With a feeling of deep disappointment, Erminie went to bed. And neither was she awakened by music climbing over the window-sill.

Before going to work the next morning she hunted up the landlord and inquired the name of the lodger on the floor below hers.

"Oh, him?" The man consulted his file and receipts. "Anton—something or other—I never could make out those gosh-awful foreign names."

Erminie bent her golden head above the bold, but almost unintelligible scrawl. It was with a thrill of kinship that she deciphered it.

"Czersky," she said. "It's a Bohemian name."

"Yeah, I guess that's it. Anyhow he aint going to be here any longer—he's two months behind now, and when I told him he'd best sell his piano and pay me for his room, you'd have thought I'd insulted his mother!"

Erminie looked hard at him.

"You aren't a musician, are you?"

"No, thank God! It's bad enough to have a house full of 'em. Well, this fellow has been peaceable enough, don't throw wild parties like some of them, or get drunk in the halls, and I'm sorry he's sick—"

Erminie's heart contracted painfully.

"Sick? You mean he's up there all alone?"

"No, he's in some hospital, but I don't know which one. They called up about it a couple days ago—said he had been picked up on the street where he'd fallen. I guess he hadn't had any too much to eat—but the phone wasn't working good that night, and I couldn't get the name of the place where they said he was."

From the shop that day Erminie sent off the completed song. "Music by Anton Czersky, words by Erminie Swazlow." Then she phoned the charity hospital. There was a long wait, and confusion. The name had to be spelled again and again—at last a brusque voice answered: "Discharged last night."

"Discharged?" There was dismay in her voice. "You don't know where he went?"

"No." The receiver clicked.

She went through her work in a daze. She played dozens of silly, tinkling melodies, ballads dripping with sickly sentiment, jazz numbers, hits from the latest musical comedies. Only once was her distracted attention aroused when a tall, haggard boy with dark rumpled hair and blue eyes underlined with dark circles leaned swaying against the counter, staring at her.

At first she thought he was drunk. Then a second glance showed her that he was sick. She half rose from the piano bench to speak to him, having a strong feeling that she had seen him before. But a giggling crowd of schoolgirls swarmed through the doorway, laden with holly, mistletoe, and futuristic angles of packages. They filled the shop with their clamor, and their shrill requests for "This one! Play this one first!" "No, play this one! Oh, go on, Pat, don't be a pig; I've got to hear it or I'll die!"

In the confusion, the man slipped out. The unthinking, youthful happiness of the girls smote Erminie with a kind of nausea. Her fingers moved lightly, automatically through the too-familiar songs. But her heart was saying, "It isn't fair! It isn't fair! They have everything—he has nothing!" In her mind the haggard, swaying boy symbolized the unknown musician who had been so much a part of her life, and who had gone out of it through her own selfish negligence.

THAT night Erminie went slowly up the stairs with the heaviness of lead in her heart. A pile of Christmas packages, set inside the door by the janitor, and letters with the familiar handwriting of her brothers and sisters, did not relieve her mood. Rather it intensified it. For happiness was the keynote of them all, happiness, and prosperity.

"The baby has been named for you, darling," Brünnehilde wrote, "because if you hadn't dragged me away from the altar that time, little Erminie might have been born with a dark complexion and incipient mustachios!"

Mimi and Rodolfo had made their musical début in Paris, and had been acclaimed as possessing the sacred flame of genius. The enclosed clippings from French papers spoke enthusiastically of the *"jeunes Americaines artistes."*

Marguerite wrote a long, amusing account of the other vaudevillians on the bill with them.

"We've even been broached by a musical comedy producer, who wants us for an act in his new review. Faustus, looking over my shoulder, has just mentioned the fact that only kegs of beer are 'broached!' He says I mean 'approached,' and maybe I do. But you get the idea anyway. Hope you'll like the little gifts we are sending."

Her brother added a postscript.

"Dear 'Minie: Look around for a new song for our act, will you? We find the classical stuff goes over O. K., but we need something a little more in the popular line as an encore. See what's in your 'Shoppe,' and send us some samples. Yours until damnation. —Faustus."

A new song? Erminie jerked another sheet of music manuscript paper from her father's portfolio, and went feverishly to work. She finished it, played it over to her own satisfaction, thrust it into an envelope with a special-delivery stamp, and went out to mail it. The piercing cold aroused a grim satisfaction in her. She was suffering a little of what *he* must have suffered; sick and hungry—wandering about until he fell exhausted—the unknown musician whose melodies had been her selfish delight. A week ago would not have been too late; why had she not aroused herself from her tired, sluggish sleep when she heard those somber, dejected chords? She had known their meaning only

too well—often she had heard her father's bitterness of spirit expressed in just such a manner. . . . .

Solomon Herzog, coming in from lunch the next day, stopped for a moment beside the piano.

"You know that number you was playing the other day when Luveitz was in? The one you was putting words to?"

"Oh, yes—"

"Well, if you don't want it pirated, beat it up to Luveitz' place right now and hand him a line that'll knock him cold; because I was just in there, and he's got some one working on it. He's figuring on taking the whole works. Hurry, kid—never mind the piano. The customers can get along with my company until you get back!"

ERMINIE needed no second bidding. And half an hour later Mr. Luveitz was spending some extremely uncomfortable moments with a young woman whose blazing eyes were quite different from the gentle brown ones he had looked into once before. At first he had tried to bluster. But the daughter of Josef Swazlow was not impressed. She let him have his say, and then she spoke:

"Very well, Mr. Luveitz, we are quite willing—anxious even—to contest your claim to this song. The publicity will be splendid for us. And I don't think there's any doubt as to the outcome, since a copyright application has been filed in Washington for over a month."

That was stretching Father Time's accustomed standard of measurement, but Erminie was fighting fire with dynamite.

"Vell, but you told me yourself you didn't know who wrote it!"

Mr. Luveitz' bluster was simmering down into fewer words and gestures.

"I always knew who wrote the words—because they are mine! And the music, Mr. Luveitz"—she paused for an instant, impressively—"is by Anton Czersky!"

Mr. Luveitz started to say "Who?"—then changed his mind. The name had all the earmarks of one that should be instantly recognized. "H-m-m," he said, "vell, vell—of course I didn't know—"

Erminie went on with an insolent calmness she was far from feeling. "Furthermore, my brother and sister have already introduced it in their act. You may have heard of them—Faustus and Marguerite Swazlow?"

This time Mr. Luveitz did not need to pretend. He looked at her with a great deal more respect.

"Oh, dey're your relations, *hein?* Vell, vell, let's have no hard feelings about dis number—it was a mistake; a misunderstandink. Now I'd like to publish it on a royalty basis, and use their pictures on the cover—*hein?* Vot do you say?"

"I can't give you an answer without consulting Mr. Czersky."

"Vell now, you tell him ve fix up a contract that vill be entirely sootable to him—and to you, Miss Swazlow. You know dese little misunderstandinks vill happen in any business—"

SHE let him bow her obsequiously from his offices. She reached the street with the taste of ashes and gall in her mouth. She had triumphed—but to what end? Where was Anton Czersky now? How could she give him this news that might mean life to his beaten, dejected spirit? He might even now be near her; might pass her on the street and she would never know. It was with difficulty that she controlled hot, tempestuous tears that rose from the source of "what might have been."

"This wont do," she told herself at last. "Tomorrow's Christmas; I've got to play up to it. Perhaps some Boy Scout angel looking for a kind deed to do, will help me find him."

She bought herself a little Christmas tree, some ornaments, and candles. She invested recklessly in a fruit-cake and a delicatessen roasted duck. She even bought a holly wreath. And with it on her arm, her cheeks glowing to the invigorating thrill of the air, she returned to the store, looking like a pretty girl on a popular magazine.

"You're a darling!" she told the pleased Mr. Herzog.

He waved a deprecating hand. "That's all right," he said, beaming. "Us musicians has got to stick together!"

It is hard to be alone on Christmas Eve. Erminie found it so, even though her spirit of forced gayety made her trim the tiny tree that filled the apartment with the luscious fragrance of the forest, hang the holly wreath in the window, light a bayberry candle, and build a snapping wood fire in the little open grate. She opened the luxurious gifts sent by her brothers and sisters. But afterward—she sat with listless hands staring into the fire. Always before there had been someone to do for; her mother—the twins—Brünnehilde—and then her father. Now there was no one. The one person to whom she might have been of assistance had been lost in the great shifting kaleidoscope of the city.

She went to bed at last, wishing that Christmas day might pass as she slept, and that she would awaken to the round of work that kept her from brooding and too much loneliness. It was hard to sleep. The little tree on the table twinkled in its Christmas dress of crimson-and-gold ornaments, and its shadow danced jubilantly on the wall as the flames in the fireplace leaped and fell. But determinedly she counted sheep jumping over a fence, until their white fleecy bodies merged with oblivion. . . . .

She was dreaming of her father. His face was careworn, desperate. He had lost his position, for shouting at the orchestra leader that he was a young fool without as much knowledge of music as a puppy. She saw him sitting on the piano bench, his head in his hands. Then he began to play—the prelude from "Tristan and Isolde." The terrible passionate chords crashed out beneath his hands, his face was like a white, set mask of death.

Erminie tried to cry out to him; but her tongue was frozen. She tried to reach him; but her body had lost all power of motion.

"Father!" Her voice broke through the icy paralysis, and she awoke. Her heart was pounding. "Father!" she cried, struggling upright. For the heaviness of sleep was still upon her. She must get to the piano—stop him—take him away—

THEN the cold wind swept in from the open window where gray dawn had taken the place of darkness. The shadowy figure of the dream vanished. *But the music was real!* The somber, tragic death-music of "Tristan and Isolde" was being played in the room below!

Erminie sprang to the window and looked down. The familiar rectangle of light made a yellow wound in the pallor of the oncoming day. The music came pulsing upward—the wild theme of futility, of unfulfilled desires, of oblivion soon to be. . . . .

Erminie flung a warm crimson-and-gold robe around her, and thrust her bare feet into fur-lined slippers. Her breath was coming in gasps as she ran down the stairway. Her teeth were clicking together.

It did not occur to her to knock. She opened the door and leaned against it, trembling. But her voice was coldly steady.

"Anton Czersky," she said in a low, even tone, "don't be a coward!"

The man at the piano jerked around and stared at her with dilated, unbelieving eyes. A young man—scarcely more than a boy, with dark, rumpled hair and blue eyes that were undercircled with black shadows.

"You—you!" he stammered, as if he doubted his sanity.

Erminie still stood there, as seemingly calm as a disembodied entity from another world, wrapped in the clinging folds of crimson and gold, her long yellow hair strewn over her shoulders like a veil. But inwardly she was in a ferment. She leaned against the door because she could not trust her limbs to support her weight.

The room was utterly, pitifully bare except for the piano and the shabby stool. It was not hard to guess that everything else had been sold—the curtains, the rugs, the furniture.

It was bitterly cold, for there was no heat. The boy's lips were blue, and his long sensitive hands were red and frozen-looking.

"I saw you in the shop yesterday," she said at last.

At that he found words. He stood up beside the piano, never taking his eyes from her—

"I've seen *you* there for months," he said. "I've thought of you, and dreamed of you, and played to you—but I never hoped, I mean I couldn't guess that you were living here—" He swayed suddenly, his voice cracked. *"Are* you living?" he cried out. "Is it just another delusion to torture me—"

He took a step toward her, his hands reaching out in a blind, groping gesture. Then he toppled, and would have crashed to the floor. But she sprang forward and caught him as he fell.

"Steady," she said quietly; "try to walk up the steps to my room—you're a little heavy to carry, you know."

"Yes, yes, of course," he muttered. He straightened himself with an effort.

"Come!" she said, as if she were speaking to a child.

AN hour later the fire in the little grate was crackling prodigiously. The tiny Christmas tree was twinkling its happiness in the renewed light. The world outside was waking to a gorgeous wintry, sunshiny Christmas day.

At first the boy had not been able to speak coherently. He could only babble and then fall silent, trembling violently. She had wrapped him in a warm comforter and plied him judiciously with hot coffee.

"You said I was a coward," he said at last in a dull, weary voice. "I was; I guess I've always been. But how did you know that I wanted to—to—" He flushed and left the sentence unfinished.

Erminie smiled; a somber, twisted smile.

"I've heard my father play like that when there was the blackness of despair in his heart. I played it once myself when I felt that *I* couldn't stand the gaff—"

He looked up at her wonderingly.

"But you did stand it—"

She nodded.

"It's the sporting thing to do," she said simply.

A hot wave of scarlet rushed up into his pale cheeks.

"You're right," he said in a changed voice. "I thought for a minute I couldn't carry on—but now I know that I can, and I will. I had wild ideas when I was a kid that I would set the world on fire with my music. I suppose that it was the Bohemian temperament behind the name of Czersky—although I'm an American—

"My teacher always told me I had genius, and he should have known, because he was one himself. But no one else seemed to think so. The only work I could find in the city here was playing in a motion-picture theater. I got a senseless idea that the job was beneath me, and quarreled with the man who gave me my position—after that there was nothing. The little money I'd saved melted away—there were days when I didn't eat—and then I got sick—"

He made a slight, appealing gesture.

"I'm not beefing about it—that's past. I've been a fool. I nearly brained the landlord when he suggested that I sell my piano and

"The same advice I gave your Dad... LISTERINE, often"

Do you remember—

When the good old family doctor came into the house how your heart began to thump? You didn't know but what you had cholera morbus or something equally dreadful. You saw yourself dying in no time.

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Rinsing the hands with Listerine before every meal destroys the germs that lodge there.

It checks SORE THROAT *quickly*

KILLS 200,000,000 GERMS IN 15 SECONDS

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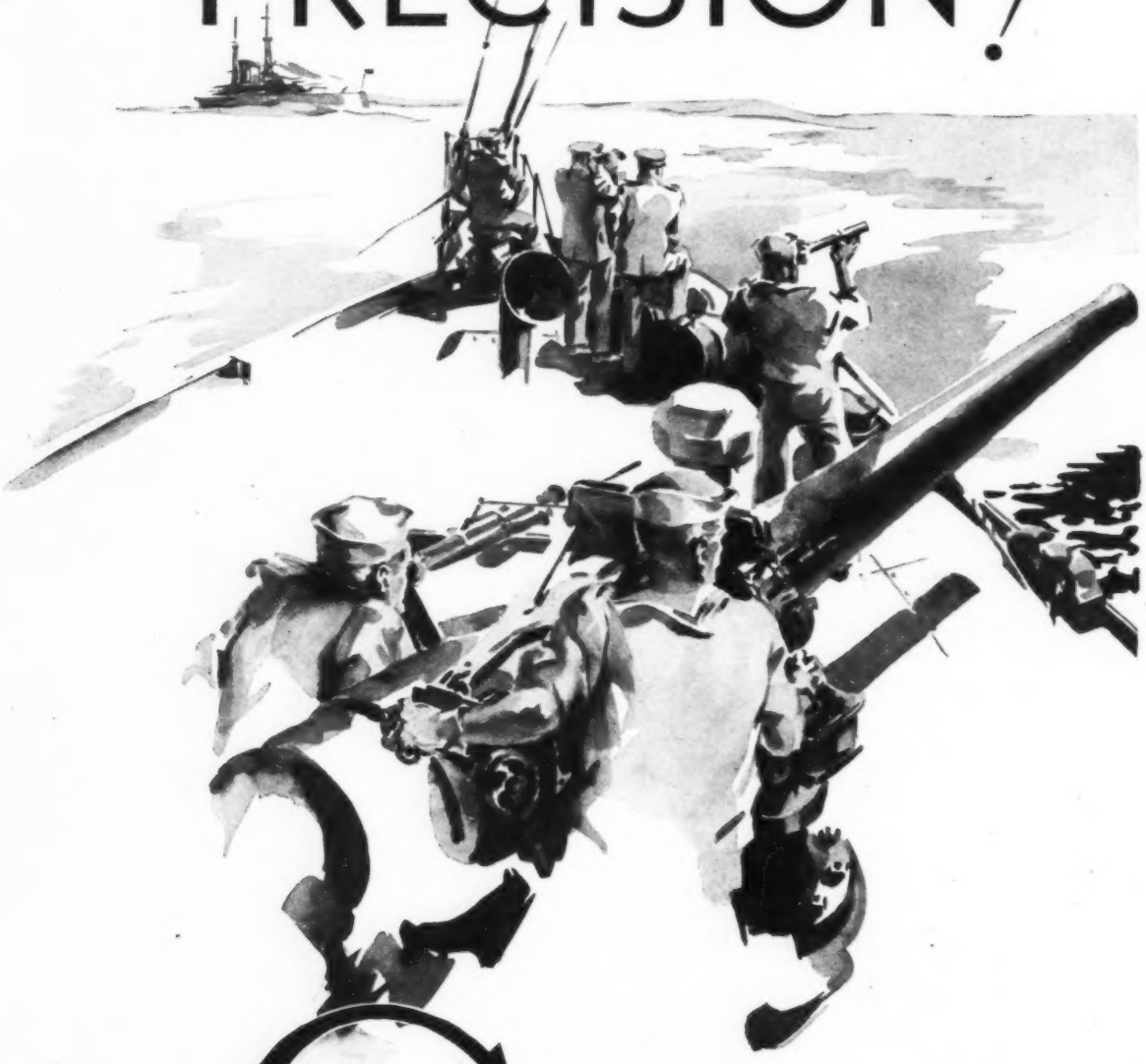

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TASTE *above everything*

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MILD... and yet
THEY SATISFY

pay him his rent. But he was right. I'm going to sell it, and I'm going to get work—*any* kind; I guess I'm too husky to be a musician anyhow—or will be when I get my strength back again—"

Erminie leaned toward him, the intensity of her eyes compelling and fierce.

"Don't you *ever* give up being a musician!" she cried. "It's worth starving for and suffering for, it's worth *anything* to know that God has given you the divine gift of being able to express beauty, and love, and sorrow, and life!"

He stared at her, electrified. Then smiled wonderingly.

"I maligned you," he said.

"You—maligned me?"

"Yes; I saw you months ago in the store where you work. You—well, you did something to me. I couldn't think of anything else—I—I played to you as I thought you were—but you'd probably kill me for it if you'd ever heard it—"

It was Erminie's turn to smile. Her eyes danced.

"I've heard it," she told him, "and so have several other people. In fact—" She laughed suddenly, a little excited laugh, like a child's, "I think you're going to be surprised about a good many things!"

A KNOCK came at the door. Erminie rose to answer it, and a yellow telegram was handed through. She tore it open and read the message swiftly. Then without a word she handed it to Anton Czersky.

"Lost Love Song a wow stop everyone crazy about it stop we want exclusive rights to introduce it stop letter follows stop Merry Christmas stop F and M."

He read it in a daze of bewilderment that made Erminie laugh delightedly again.

"The new number that's a 'wow'—is *your song!*" she told him, "the one you played to me when you thought of me as sweetness and light in Peoria! I put words to it—and you'll probably want to kill *me* when you hear them. But never mind, it's going to be a success! I have a contract all ready for you—only you must put on a Bohemian accent and act very, very foreign and impressive when you go to sign it!"

"But—but—who are F and M?" he queried, almost stuttering.

"Faustus and Marguerite."

"What?"

"Yes; don't be alarmed—our father did things like that. We were all christened out of operas—my name is Erminie."

"You—you—" His pallor returned so startlingly that she was afraid he was going to collapse again. "Your father was—"

"Josef Swazlow," she said gently.

He sat down suddenly. For a long moment he could not speak.

"Your father was my first teacher," he said at last in a queer, strained voice, "the one who told me I was a genius."

Erminie's eyes were sparkling behind tears. She nodded her head vigorously.

"It's my opinion too," she answered.

Their eyes met and clung wonderingly, a little dizzily, trying to comprehend the miracle of fate.

"Erminie—" he said very low, "I'm like the—the lost love song. You found it and gave it a home in your heart—do you think in time, if I make good, you could give me a place there, too?"

She caught her breath, and her hands came up in an unconscious gesture of defense. A roaring turmoil of chaotic memories flooded her mind—frantic exhibitions of musical "temperament," bitter despondency, selfishness—endless worrying over trifles—would she not be a fool to plunge into it again, knowingly?

Then the remembrance of her mother's face came to her—that sad, pale face among the strewn flowers, and the lips moving in a wan smile—

"Anyway—it hasn't been—monotonous—"

She laughed suddenly, a little breathless laugh.

"There are two of us, you know, Erminie—and Minnie! Erminie will love the gypsyness in you—and Minnie will step on it kindly but firmly! Erminie will love your compositions—and Minnie will make you sell them! It wont be a peaceful life, because Minnie will make you work like Beethoven and Irving Berlin in partnership. Are you sure you want to risk it?"

He was staring at her with growing wonder and adoration.

"You're — you're wonderful!" he said almost in a whisper. "Erminie—please keep us both, the song—and me!"

His eyes lighted up with the sparkle that sometimes had been in his music.

"Copyright applied for!" he pleaded.

Erminie lifted her eyes to his. Her fingers slipped into his outstretched hand.

"Copyright granted," she answered, a little unsteadily.

MANHATTAN MIRAGE

(Continued from page 72)

first interview, "but it's simply doing all the things I can't find time for, only I expect them to be done much better than I can."

"I'll try it," said Mrs. Thorndike. "I'd try anything to get away from being a governess, or a companion to an old lady, or selling things in a store. That's the sort of jobs I've had, and I hate them all. The children always know more French than I do, and the old ladies are so dull; and as for selling things—I couldn't persuade a one-legged man to buy a crutch!"

She fitted very well into the Reyburn household, did her work and a little more, and was thoroughly impersonal and effacing about it and herself, always such an agreeable attitude in the stranger employed in a home. Nancy liked her, which was helpful to Effie.

After a great deal of telephoning, calls, and various luncheons and small teas to which anxious mothers brought tentative dates and long guest-lists, the débutante season was at last getting into shape. Effie, with Mrs. Villiers, attended many of these functions, which resembled nothing so much as meetings of an unwieldy, badly selected committee. Most of the women wanted early dates, to get their girls launched, but there was a final agreement that the large late balls should not come too close together—"or we'll all be dead," as a mother with twin daughters to bring out gloomily commented. There were tea-and-dinner dances, receptions, but not too many, endless luncheons to cram into a sort of sequence. Necessarily there were some duplications of date, but these were for the smaller affairs. And there was an informal going-over of names of the younger set, to see if any had been left out, and to blacklist a few who had behaved too badly or whose families had not quite qualified for the inner circle. There were times when Effie wanted to shout with laughter at some of the remarks, offered in all seriousness. "Who is Skip Marshall, and *who* are Fuzzy Classon and Veevee King, I wonder?" asked one mother, adding: "My daughter made out this list, and hasn't used anything but nicknames, and they're *so* hard to identify."

Another, apropos of a certain young man, said: "I wont have him again; he borrowed money from my butler, and he wears a flowered silk waistcoat with his dinner coat. I might have endured the borrowing, but that waistcoat—no!"

Since the Villiers-Reyburn party was to be huge and resplendent, Effie found herself treated amiably enough, but now and then she ran against points of suspicion and curiosity. One of these was when she met Ariana's mother, who was, even as Nancy had described her, hard and cold and beautiful. Mrs. Wood chose to be slightly up-stage to Effie, but she could not ignore her entirely, and as Effie remained unaffected, she presently became more amiable, but always with reserve. Effie did not like her, but she was fascinated by her astuteness. Nothing came under Mrs. Wood's eyes which was not turned in some way to her own advantage, or instantly and adroitly rejected.

THE thing that impressed Effie most was the deadly seriousness of it, and the huge importance it had for its protagonists. They might have been settling the fate of nations. Sometimes she wanted to cry out, like *Alice in Wonderland*, "You're nothing but a pack of cards," and scatter them all with a wave of her hand. Here they were, no more than an infinitesimal percent of the city's seven million people, working out their brief useless parade with the air of Napoleons. Yet Effie knew that there were among them the women who belonged to the hospital boards, the charities, work for art, for music and for social betterment, and who worked ably, generously and whole-heartedly for these things. "There's no use judging," she thought. "They're exactly like the little clerk who earns twenty a week, and wants to dance every night, but who'll go without her lunch to give something when they pass around the hat for a sick comrade. We're all the same stuff inside, we humans; we go through much the same motions, either with accessories of wealth or with the bareness of poverty. Life is cut by an identical pattern, only some of it is with trimmings, and some is plain."

There was a great deal for her to learn, and a great deal for her to do, but she still found herself desperately lonely for her old relations with Walter. She saw him as usual; they went about together; but the moments of tenderness, the complete understanding, had vanished, and she could not bring them back. Most of her conversation with him, she realized, was about money, how much she must have for each new necessity of Nancy's season. Her own needs she cut down severely—but for Nancy she felt she must not economize. It was amazing how much money she required, and sometimes she felt apologetic to Walter for the amount, but he didn't seem to mind; he gave her what she asked for without question or comment.

They did not mention Lora Evans, though Effie had stopped asking her to the house. She had hoped that Walter would protest this, but he did not, and his very silence made her the more unhappy. On the rare occasions when they met her at the Bishops', she saw that Mrs. Evans and Walter were carefully polite and casual with each other, and she knew this was artificial, assumed for the benefit of herself and Clarence Bishop. Effie knew, as only a woman knows who has loved and lived with a man for a period of years, that this other woman now filled the forefront of his interest. But she chose to ignore, to say nothing, not only for Nancy's sake, but with the persistent hope that it could not always go on, that Lora Evans could never hold him.

This patience, this enforced waiting, was cruelly hard, but she could live with her unhappiness and show an unconcerned face to the world, even to the intimate world of her children. . . . .

Effie tried to submerge herself in her activities, to become vitally concerned with them; but that was impossible, and she could not discover the reason—it might be, she

Portrait painted for The Hoover Co. by Ralph Fisher Skelton

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Am I the Woman of a Year Ago?

I WONDER if you remember me—you husbands to whom I said last Christmas the things I could not say to my husband? ¶ I was the woman whose husband gave her each Christmas some pretty trinket. The woman whose youth was slipping from her too fast. The woman whose cleaning burdens were too heavy. The woman who wanted, but could not ask for, a Hoover. ¶ I'm not the woman of a year ago. ¶ In one short year I have discovered that youth need not go so swiftly—that cleaning duties need not be burdensome. ¶ *For last Christmas my husband did give me a Hoover!*

"GIVE HER A HOOVER AND YOU GIVE HER THE BEST"

thought, because she was in the grip of such constant inward misery, or it might be because she could never be convinced of the necessity for all this luxurious pageant.

ONCE she spoke of this to Mr. Bishop: "I see the army of people who live by it all—I mean the florists, the dressmakers, the caterers, the servants, and so on; but I'm convinced that if nine-tenths of it was swept away, we'd all be just as happy, and relieved from a burden. It doesn't make anyone better or more clever, or more beautiful or even happier to be surrounded with so much useless elaboration."

"I think it makes them happier," said Mr. Bishop. "It is flattering to the ego to be able to purchase what is perfectly useless and unnecessary, you know."

"Offerings to the gods of Power and Vanity by the devout worshipers, you mean."

"Something of the sort. Don't take it too seriously."

"I try not to take anything too seriously," said Effie. "Not even Mrs. Villiers' ancestors."

"But that's treason, heresy and schism."

"Oh, at least that! Don't give me away."

"Now that I know your guilty secret, I may use it for blackmail."

"Do," urged Effie. "I'd like to know how it's done." She had not seen Mr. Bishop often since they were back in town, but he had promised to come to Nancy's and Margery's débutante dance, and now and then he sent flowers to Effie, or did some unobtrusive, thoughtful kindness which, she observed, usually had far-reaching effects. An opera box for a most exclusive charity benefit, entrance to a private art view where there were none save the very elect, seats for an important first night at the theater—Effie wondered how he managed it; he seemed to be able to pull strings anywhere he wished. He could, she found, command far more attention than Copley Villiers, Sr., when he so wished. And she was sure that he constantly put chances to make money in Walter's way, or they could not have afforded a tenth of their expenses. With Effie he had resumed the easy, half-serious, half-bantering manner of their earlier talks, and she found him always a soothing oasis to her rushed, overwrought existence. He and Nancy also had struck up a friendship which on her side alternated between extreme respect and extreme flippancy, and on his was a quiet, amiable treatment of her as an intelligent adult, which she enjoyed.

Not that Nancy had much time for any one person, particularly an older one. She was having exactly the success she wished, and she was blooming out into real beauty, brilliant, glowing. Half a dozen other men beside Copley Junior clamored around her, and she was popular enough with the girls. Those who rivaled her could not neglect her—she was too attractive.

"D'you want to ask Manie or Bruce on for your début?" Effie asked her.

"No, I think not. I don't need him, and she'd be hard to fit in. I did my duty by them in the summer." And that was all she would say; but when a box of flowers came from Bruce on the day of her coming-out party, she chose them to carry that night, though there were other far more lavish offerings. Young Copley was furious when he saw them.

"Those things are downright grubby," he raged. "What's the big idea? I had a right to expect you to wear the ones I sent you."

"You haven't any rights, Cop," said Nancy, unperturbed. "You haven't any rights, or any privileges, either, where I'm concerned, unless I say so. I liked your flowers, but I happen to like these even better."

"Who sent 'em to you?"

"Oh—the head-waiter at the Ritz, or my father, or Rascoe Blaine, or somebody. Now forget it. And move along, please; you're obstructing traffic."

She stood demurely beside Margery, but no one saw the other girl, Nancy was so radiant, so darkly lovely. She had the simplest white frock, but she had tied a bright chiffon handkerchief to her wrist, and when the dancing began, it was the oriflamme which every lad in the stag line followed blindly. She was cut in on constantly; she danced through two pairs of stockings and had to run to the dressing-room, where Mrs. Thorndike waited with fresh supplies. There was no question about it; this was Nancy's night.

Effie watched her triumph with a lump in her throat which would not go. "I'm just silly about her," she turned to say to Walter. "I know it, but she's such a darling, and she's ours. I don't know why it should, but it makes me feel pathetic and weepy. I hope I'm not going to be one of these old ladies who shed tears over all family ties."

"I hope not too," said Walter. "There's certainly nothing to cry about; she's having the time of her life, and she's making all the other girls green with envy." He glanced about him restlessly. "Lord, but I'm tired of being agreeable to these old dowagers," he went on. "Talk about the labors of Hercules—"

LORA EVANS had not been invited; she was not on Mrs. Villiers' list except for second-best parties. Naturally she could not be asked to an occasion such as this, the début of the only daughter, with all the sacrosanct connections of Villiers and Van Gromerich present. Effie wondered if Walter had looked for her, if he missed her. He was impatient, abrupt, almost absent-minded, not even quite intent on the exploits of his favorite child. Effie longed to ask him if something was worrying him, but it was neither the time nor the place. This evening all the mother's attention and care belonged to Nancy.

"It's going very well," said Mrs. Villiers, in a lull of activity for the hosts, "but Margery is dancing too often with that young Gray. I must speak to her."

"Oh, don't," protested Effie, "—not tonight. It will disconcert her so, if she thinks you're watching her, and the rush Tim Gray's giving her will make her even more popular with the other men."

Mrs. Villiers stiffened for a moment; vulgar popularity was not desirable (theoretically) for a scion of her family. But she paused thoughtfully; Effie had been a genuine aid, and an agreeable one, in this launching of the two girls. Perhaps Effie was right. She would not speak to Margery now.

After supper the elders present thinned out, but Mr. and Mrs. Villiers, Effie and Walter stayed on until the dawn, and the breakfast of sausages and scrambled eggs and coffee which was served at five. But at last it was over, and the most indefatigable youngsters owned that it was time to go. They trooped out through the empty halls of the hotel, where the cleaners were beginning to work, silent, gray figures who stood aside to let the scuffed silver slippers, the drooping chiffons and silks go by. Mrs. Villiers was ashen with weariness, her husband sagged and scolded. Walter and Effie were tired too, so tired they could not speak. But Nancy was buoyant and shining.

"Oh, Mother!" she exclaimed, as they got into the waiting car. "Oh, Dad! Wasn't it simply *divine!*"

Chapter Twenty-eight

"THE day of a débutante," said Rascoe Blaine. "Tell me all."

"D'you want to use it?" asked Nancy. She was looking into her vanity-case, to be sure everything was there.

"Maybe. Anyway, tell me. Knowledge is power."

"What about your play?"

"You wander so far from the subject. The play's coming on fine. I've rewritten it fourteen times, and there's nothing left of the original script but the title and the names of two characters. We open next week in Washington. I ought to be at a rehearsal this minute, but I couldn't stick it, so I sent word I was very ill and came over here hoping to see you and get some tea and a few sane words."

"From me? Sane words? Rascoe, you flatterer! Be yourself."

"Oh, I expected your mother would be here too."

"I thought there was a catch in it. Mother'll be along shortly. I'm waiting for her. I haven't any money."

Rascoe settled himself comfortably into a chair by the window, and looked out on the marvelous skyline. "What a backdrop this would make!" he murmured. Then, "Nancy, you're prettier than ever. But too thin. I hate that diet look. Come along, what are you up to?"

"Very well, you've brought it on yourself. I get up when the first telephone call comes for me; I have some orange juice and a roll; I look at my letters and invitations, and flowers, if any." She grinned mischievously. "Then I dash into my clothes and go off to the League classes, and that lasts until nearly lunch-time—and there are always two or three of these going on, I mean, and I've tried to pick the one I'll like best—"

"You mean these giggly debby luncheons after which you all parade up Park Avenue wearing ungainly corsage bouquets?"

"How intelligent you're growing! Exactly—and photographers snap us as we come out or go in for the reading-from-left-to-right pictures in the Sunday supplements. And then there's bridge somewhere, or a tap-dancing lesson or a fencing lesson, and then there are three or four teas to drop in at, or more bridge, and then I simply fly home and dress for a dinner-dance or a theater party and there's usually a big late party somewhere, and supper about four or five in the morning, and I'm popping into my little bed again at dawn."

"Sounds rather monotonous to me."

NANCY put her sleek black head on one side in an attitude of deep thought. "For the first month I loved it. But now—I've had two months of it, and I don't get nearly as much kick out of it as I did. The League classes are too easy; the luncheon menus are all the same; I get awfully tired of the girls—"

"What about the men? Any heavy suitors beside the faithful Cop?"

"Several. But the trouble is with them—they're young!"

Rascoe flung himself back with a shout of laughter. "Oh, my dear child, that's priceless. They're young, are they! What d'you want—gray whiskers and a tummy?"

"Don't be silly," said Nancy, undisturbed. "I mean that most of the stag line are kids, not grown-up men. They're still in college, or just out of it, and—well—I don't know—they seem so immature, and so irresponsible, so sort of unfinished, if you can understand that. Most of them are heavenly dancers, but now and then, you know, you've got to talk to them, and none of 'em have much of a line. They ask you if you've seen such and such a show, or something about sports, and they pull a wise crack or two—and there you are. Then there are some who are just plain cold fish, out looking for rich girls to play with—you know, like Timmy Gray after Margery; and they usually tip their hands and ask you a lot of questions about the different girls, and their families, and it makes you disgusted. And then there's a few of the boys who are awfully rich themselves, like Cop, and they expect the girls to run after them—and some

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YOU know, quite a lot of people make good with just brains. Successful creative work and high scholastic standing are just as exciting and gratifying as winning in other sports. In the end it gets down to a competition in brains and nothing else.

Brain muscles keep on winning after body muscles have softened.

The point is that in brain sports, Corona is as useful as matched golf clubs or a well-strung racket are in other sports. Of course, in college, you can hardly make the grade without a typewriter. Typewritten work invariably gets higher marks. Written work often gets no marks at all simply because no one can read it. In any form of literary competition, Corona is as necessary as running shoes to a runner or sharp skates to a skater.

As a matter of fact, every member of the family needs Corona. Mother's club work, for example—papers to be read, resolutions, committee reports, publicity work; also the conduct of household affairs. Many times a year it would be a help to Dad when he has night work to do—speeches, articles for technical papers, an occasional important letter.

It's up to you to let the family know that your big Christmas need this year is a Corona. Families are often hazy about presents without a little guidance. It might work just to mail this advertisement to one of your parents. A subtle hint like that is sometimes as effective as coming out and asking. The family will thank you for getting Corona into the home.

Corona is a great machine. You'll know that the instant you get your fingers on it. Smooth running as a new car, durable as a good reputation, easy to learn, so sturdily simple that it never goes wrong.

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There are two Corona models: Corona with standard keyboard at $60, and Corona Special with three-row keyboard at $39.50. Attractive carrying case comes with either model. Both are finished in many different colors. Sold by all typewriter dealers and in stationery stores, department stores and specialty gift shops. Dealers will be glad to send one on trial and arrange for gradual payment. An allowance will be made on your old typewriter. L C Smith & Corona Typewriters Inc, 51 Madison Ave., New York City.

CORONA

of the girls do. I don't know, Rascoe—it's all a sort of business, and that takes the fun out of it."

"'The world is hollow and my doll is stuffed with sawdust; and if you please, Grandmama, I will go into a nunnery,'" quoted Rascoe solemnly. "The trouble is, Nancy, you're too much like your mother. She doesn't give a tuppenny damn for all this show. I've watched her operate. I know."

"I don't think I'm like Mother at all; I'm ever so much more like Dad, and he loves it. Well—next month's January, and the League elections'll be over, and—"

"You're sure you'll get in?"

"Mrs. Villiers will flay alive anyone who would have the nerve to bar her child's girl-friend. Yes, I'll be a Junior Leaguer, all right. And then I'm going in for some of the things they do—there's a lot more to it than mere fluff, you know. Maybe I'll be one of the *intelligentsia* like you, after a while."

She jumped up. "Thank goodness, here's Mother. Darling, will you give me some money? I'm due for contract at Charlotte's, and haven't a nickel."

"She's simply been wasting her time with me until you arrived," said Rascoe, shaking hands with Effie.

Nancy made a face at him: "You *said* you came to see Mother. By-by, angels—don't talk about me behind my back."

Effie sat down in Nancy's place. "Pour my tea, Rascoe, please. I'm tired."

Rascoe fussed unhandily about the tea-wagon, but she made no move to help him.

"What are you tired of?" he asked. "Not me, I hope."

"No, not you." She smiled. "How's the play?"

HE began to tell her about it, not as he had talked to Nancy, but carefully, in detail. She drank her tea, and listened. This autumn of hard work had left its mark on the young man; he was less affected, more sincere. "I wish you'd come down to Washington for the first night," he concluded, "or would you rather wait for it in New York, after it's been licked into shape by the week out of town?"

"I'll wait, I think. Are you awfully excited over it, Rascoe?"

"No, not any longer. I've done everything I could; I've put my best licks into it. Nobody can do any more than that."

"No," said Effie reflectively. "No—nobody can do any more than that—in anything."

"You know," he went on, "that last summer with you did me a lot of good. I didn't tell you, but I'd been playing around with a woman who—I oughtn't to talk about her, but she was older than I, and she made a fuss over me, and stuffed me up with the idea that I was a young genius, and that things ought to come my way without any effort on my part, and—and—she let me spend too much on her, and kept stringing me along. But when I went out in the country with you,—I don't know,—it all changed around. You were so easy and simple and honest with everybody, and James Terry and Nancy are such grand kids, and so crazy about you, and you made it so clear that you didn't think I was much, but at least I could work—"

"Rascoe—I didn't—"

"Not in so many words, but you indicated it more or less. Anyway, I got hold of myself and finished this play, and week after next I'll see it on Broadway. Now, that's nothing world-shaking, except to me. And honest, you made me do it. I'd have still been dangling around after Lora—" He stopped and bit his lip. "I didn't mean to say that. Maybe you knew."

"No—I didn't know. I shouldn't have thought any man interested her unless he had money to spend on her. You don't mind my saying that."

"You're perfectly right. But you see—my people give me something now and then, and she was always telling me they ought to, that I was an artist, that I ought to get support from the low commercial world—well, anyway, she got most of what they sent me, and I was swallowing her apple-sauce, and crying for more. Never again, Effie. Now, will you please forget all this except that you showed me what an ass I am, and made me ashamed of myself."

"You did it yourself—you're not the sort to be ruined by a cheap siren like Lora Evans. You'd have come out of it of your own accord."

"I don't believe I would, though she'd have ditched me as soon as she got hold of a real spender. But you see, Effie, men like to have a woman flatter and butter them up. We can absorb a wonderful amount of sweet stuff. Of course Lora makes her great hit with the men who haven't had much experience with women—that was one thing that ailed me. That affair of hers with Fred Dearman—that was the same old stuff. He was a quiet little stick of a man with a wife who oppressed him, and Lora made him think he was a conquering hero! He boomed out and made heaps of money,—and he had a lot anyway,—and maybe he didn't fling it around! She got her share!"

"But what happened—why did he leave her?"

"She overdid it; he believed her so well that when a lovely little blonde came along, with Lora's same line, and half her age, he could see no reason why the best was any too good for him. So he went off with the little blonde, and Lora lost her heavy sugar. . . . . Say, I'm a dirty tramp to talk like this. But Lora was sure he'd get a divorce and marry her, and to have him nipped away from her by this little baby-face, who didn't even try to put any gloss on her character! Lora's always pretended to be respectable, and of course the Bishops jack her up pretty hard, now and then, and she keeps this decorator's business going in a feeble way, as a blind. I'm going to write a play about Lora sometime, you know. She's not through yet, by a long shot. She'll get hold of some poor doddering idiot with a bank-roll who'll marry her, see if she don't. She's unscrupulous—and she's clever, too. Effie, I oughtn't to have sat here and blackguarded her like this. Only—now that she doesn't fascinate me any more, she still interests me—as a type, you know. I think she'd make a ripping play, only I don't believe the dear public would like to see her triumph in the last act."

"It's been very illuminating. I've never heard the particulars of the Dearman affair before. You know I don't like her."

"You couldn't. You're as different as day and night." He rose, took Effie's hand and kissed it gently. "Good-by—I've stayed hours. I'm keeping four seats for you for my première."

"We'll have a party afterward," promised Effie mechanically. "Are you in love with your leading lady?"

"Say, that girl's got a hefty husband who'd bust me on the nose if I passed a kind word to her. No, I'm only in love with you."

"Then you're perfectly safe. Good-by."

EFFIE sat still after Rascoe Blaine had gone, thinking of what he had said about Lora Evans. He had supplied the motive for Lora's pursuit of Walter; he had filled out and completed the picture of her which Effie had already been sure of the main outline. "But there's nothing she can do," thought Effie, with bitter honesty. "She can't marry him because he's already married to me. He can't force me into the divorce court, no matter what he does. But it's disgusting, humiliating! The last thing in the world I ever expected to be was a woman hanging on desperately to a man who doesn't want her any more. And that man is my Walter, mine, my dear, my love! What'll it all lead to, and where are we going? If Nancy marries, as she certainly will, and with James Terry growing up and away from me every day and every hour, what's to become of me? What do other women do who are in the same boat, I wonder? I suppose I'll take to cards and gigolos and prolonged stays abroad. What a future! If I could only not care so much, if I could stop loving him—but I can't; it wont die unless I die, too."

SHE put her head back, covered her eyes with her hand, and was sitting there when Walter came in. He looked tired and irritable. "Are we going somewhere to-night?" he asked.

"Dinner with music afterward at the Kramers," she said without moving.

"Oh—the Bendevoort Kramers. I suppose we can't duck out of that; he's on our board. It'll be deadly."

"We can leave early, perhaps before the music begins. It's a young unknown singer protegée of Mrs. Kramer's, I believe."

"Worse and worse. You might stay, and I'll get out." He looked at the tea-wagon vindictively. "Why don't you have cocktails instead of this stuff—no wonder no one drops in here around five o'clock."

"I'll ring for cocktails."

"Don't bother; I've had all I want. It's just the idea of coming in and finding everything about as lively as a funeral."

"You should have stayed at Lora Evans'," she wanted to say, but did not. "There have been people here; it's rather late now," she said evenly. "I don't want to serve cocktails to Nancy's friends—you know Mrs. Villiers and some of the other women in her set agreed to check afternoon drinking among the younger set as much as possible."

"Mrs. Villiers! The old fossil!" He walked about restlessly. "We don't need to take orders from her."

"But I thought, so long as you were in the bank—"

"Let me tell you something: Villiers has got his back to the wall down at the bank—Burton's too strong for him, I'm afraid. It's all clear now, what he's been working for. He wants a merger with the Phoenix Trust, and if he puts it through, there wont be any Rasten Bank in six months' time, and Mr. Villiers and his whole crowd will be in the discard."

"Walter! Why, Walter—why didn't you tell me before!"

"I couldn't tell you before; I didn't know it myself. I've been kept in the dark right along, made a fool of—"

"But I thought Mr. Bishop—"

"Bishop's so damned clever the Burton crowd'll have to make peace with him—and he'll set his own price, too."

"But what'll they do—what will happen to you?"

"God knows; I don't. I may be carried along; I may find myself sitting on the sidewalk with my walking-papers in my hand. Now, see here, Effie; nothing's decided yet; it's all up in the air, so hold your tongue. Don't say a word to anybody, understand? I feel pretty certain that in the last analysis they'll see that I'm necessary to them; I've done some very important things down there." He made a grandiose gesture, threw back his head. "And I'm not the sort they can set down like a mere office-boy or a clerk."

She surmised that behind his swagger he was afraid, that he was talking to convince himself.

"Of course not," she agreed, though fighting back her own terror of this new danger. She went on, feeling her way: "D'you want me to cut down on expenses, to—"

"I do not!" he exploded. "Petty economy never helped anything! And I don't want to talk about this any more; very likely nothing will happen. I didn't mean to speak of

it at all. And you be careful, Effie; don't let drop a word or hint to a soul. Not a soul, understand?"

Chapter Twenty-nine

IT was a merry Christmas only in outward semblance. Effie's chief joy was in James Terry, home from school, taller and broader than ever, and so grown-up in his voice and manner that it seemed absurd to think him a boy. Nancy was in a whirl of parties, intensified by all the seniors of every university, apparently, in a radius of five hundred miles. She gave a dance of her own, and there were always extra young people at lunch or dinner on the rare times when she was at home for these meals. But there was no tree, no family dinner, no music nor quiet hours together as there had always been before. Walter announced defiantly to Effie that he would be out of town over the actual holiday; he was going hunting in Virginia, he said, with a party of men. She did not think it was true, but did not comment. He gave her a check and told her to buy gifts for herself and the children and the servants. His manner forebade questioning; he was, she saw, ready to flare, to make an issue of the whole situation, and she would not permit it.

Without him she would not accept invitations; so she and James Terry hung wreaths and tied up parcels, and went to the theater together, each pretending to be gay and happy, but Effie knew he wondered and was sparing her by behaving as if it was perfectly natural for his father to be away. He wanted a set of Conrad for Christmas, and a pair of skis, and Effie and he shopped until he was quite satisfied with their choice. For Nancy she bought a fur scarf and a necklace of turquoise and old East Indian beads, but she bought nothing for herself. There was an appalling list of servants and apartment-house attendants whose expectant palms must be filled. James Terry helped her with this, grumbling, "Gosh, what a hold-up! D'you mean to say we've got to give something to the porters and the ashmen and all the people we've never even laid eyes on?"

"We'll count it as part of the rent," said Effie. "That's the only way to look at it. The superintendent has the names all typed and sent around to every tenant, I understand. If we don't give something, we'll have a lot of petty annoyances, with the heat and the plumbing and the telephone and packages. Everyone who lives in an apartment here tells me that's what happens."

ON Christmas morning Effie hoped against hope that there would be at least a wire from Walter, but there was nothing. She and Nancy and James Terry had sent him a long night-letter, but she looked for word from him in vain. There were flowers from Rascoe Blaine, and more flowers from Mr. Bishop, and dozens of cards and telegrams—but the one message she longed for was not there. James Terry watched her hunt through the trayful of mail carefully, painstakingly, to be sure not to miss it. "You looking for anything special?" he asked.

"Oh, no, I just want to be sure we've had no cards or telegrams from people we sent nothing to," she said.

Every morning she read the financial news of three newspapers, looking for some hint of what was going on in the bank, but she found nothing, and she was profoundly uneasy, in secret torment. At times she accused herself of weakness and lack of courage because she had not forced Walter to tell her explicitly of what might happen, give her exact knowledge to go on, and not leave her to imagine and to fear. But she knew him so well, knew how he would resent her probing as lack of faith in his ability, lack of belief in his strength.

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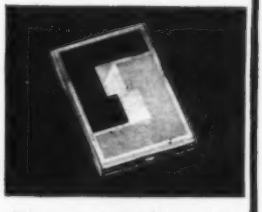

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she thought. "Whatever is going to happen is going to happen, whether I have weeks of dreading it or whether it drops down on me suddenly. And if we begin on the bank, we'll go on to Lora Evans, as sure as the world, and that'll mean—heaven knows what! No, I'll stay on the surface until I'm dragged under, and I wont go down without a struggle."

She remembered her days of worry in Drochester when the breach between Walter and Parkinson was developing, and how drawn and tense she had grown over it—but then she had known what was happening, he had not been alienated from her. She recalled how she had counted up their resources, planned for a crisis—it seemed childish now. And she reflected with sharp irony on the helplessness of the married woman, bound to her husband by love and mutual interest, by children, by belief in him; her fortunes must rise and fall with his; she must take whatever form of life he shapes, unless she has money or an independent profession of her own. But she knew it was her love, her true and unchanging love for Walter that kept her with him, not the need of material support. She could not stop loving him, no matter what he did.

When Walter came back late in Christmas week, he was more unapproachable than ever, a state which did nothing to allay Effie's fears. James Terry asked her wonderingly: "What's Dad so grouchy about, d'you know?"

"He's not very well—you know how peevish you are when you're sick."

"Humph!" said James Terry, and said no more. Effie kept him out of his father's way as much as she could, and she was glad when he went back to school, even though she missed him overwhelmingly. At the very last moment, at the station, she had an impulse to reveal to him something of her difficulties, but checked herself, and as she went home she was glad she had been able to be silent.

"It would be pretty shabby of me to put that sort of responsibility on him just because I want to ease my own misery by telling some one," she decided. "I'm not down to that, thank heaven."

THERE was only one person in the world to whom Effie might have confided her trouble, and that was Mr. Bishop, the sleepily suave, the gentle and all-seeing, his knowledge and understanding and power masked by his inscrutably quiet face and manner. More than once Effie found herself wondering if she might dare to talk to him, but always, at the last minute, she did not. There is a compensating dignity in the soul which faces its troubles alone, without support, and Effie's worst and most despairing moments found this dignity in her unrevealing endurance of them.

And besides, though scarcely admitting it freely to herself, Effie knew that Mr. Bishop's interest in her was too personal, and she liked him too much to let him betray it to her. Under his imperturbability there was shyness and sensitiveness—yes, and loneliness. If she stretched out her hand to him, if she put into words her fears, her anxieties, her suffering, she would be giving him the right to tell her his, and it would only bring fruitless emotion, and an awkward self-consciousness to them both. Anything she could say would imply complaint and criticism of Walter, and that was a disloyalty she could not contemplate.

They went on into the first of the year. Nancy and Margery, Ariana, Charlotte were Junior Leaguers, and much concerned—except Ariana—as to what branch of activities they would attach themselves. Nancy, to her great joy, was given a small part in their midwinter musical play; this revived all her latent stage ambitions, and she besought Rascoe to let her understudy the ingénue in his play, running on merrily to its eleventh week. The present understudy was just leaving, having secured a real part in another show.

"The author has no influence," he assured her. "But you can come down and vamp the manager and see what happens."

"I'd do it without any pay, you know, Rascoe," urged Nancy.

"Don't say that to Carson—if it's worth doing, it's worth paying for. And don't be too sure that he'll take you on—he hates amateurs. His only reason will be to snaffle a little extra publicity out of it. 'Beautiful young débutante understudies part in Broadway success'—that'll be his angle, if I know the gentleman."

"I don't care so long as he says I'm beautiful."

"Oh, conceit—he'd say so, if you were as ugly as mud! And it wont be easy, you know, if you land it. You'll have to report at the theater every night and every matinée and see if the girl you're understudying is going on. You don't have to stay for the whole performance."

"It'll be a grand excuse to avoid dull parties."

"It'll be deadly dull itself," was Rascoe's last word.

EFFIE made no objection when Nancy put the matter before her. "Why do you want to do it?" she asked. "I thought you were having such a glorious time this winter, that you were having exactly what you longed for most."

"I did long for it, Mother," confessed Nancy with engaging frankness, "but it's worn thin. I—well, I've turned down Cop flat; I had to. I'd thought—maybe I could stand it; but after what you said—you know, Mother, you were pretty smart. You pulled my own thoughts about him right out of my subconscious mind, and said them out loud—then I knew I couldn't. And then I began to wonder what all this dancing and whoopee was for, exactly. I can't go on doing it year after year, till I'm like some of those terribly old girls I see at the League. I thought, if I made a sort of spectacular marriage—and it would be spectacular to marry Cop Villiers, even if he is a moron—well, then it would sort of round off the season, give me a place, and something to do—"

"But Nancy, Cop Villiers isn't the only man in the world. You know plenty of others who aren't morons. What about all these flowers from Bill Jennings and Jardie Stokes, for instance?"

"Bill and Jardie are lambs, both of them. And maybe they'd be heavy suitors, if I'd let them. But I don't want them. I want something to *do* that isn't dependent on anybody but *myself*. I was crazy to get this social stuff from the inside, and I've been a success, everybody knows it. And I worked awfully hard to do it, didn't I?"

"And not only you, my dear."

"Yes, I know, you've put your shoulder to the wheel, you blessed angel, and it's irked you now and then. But look, here's my whole life—now I've pulled off one big thing, and made awfully good on it, but, I can't stop there. Maybe if I work just as hard I can do something else big. You know how I've always wanted to be an actress, Mother. Wouldn't you like to see your child become an Ethel Barrymore or a Mrs. Fiske?"

"I don't mind if you try it. But I think your father wont like it, Nancy. And he's going to be disappointed about Cop, I'm afraid."

"That's funny—after the way he objected to Bruce Ledge." Something in the way she said the name made Effie know that here was the key to Nancy's desire for independence. Of course—Bruce! It was Bruce's devotion, unwavering, unselfish, that had kept Nancy from wrecking herself in an ambitious marriage. It was because of Bruce that Nancy could not be contented in her aimless dancing round, it was because of Bruce that she was reaching blindly toward purposeful work. Perhaps, in the end she would turn to him openly. "If that boy's love can do this for my child," thought Effie, "surely, surely my love for Walter can do as much, in another way."

"Oh, Nancy," she said, "d'you still hear from Bruce? I thought he was quite out of the picture."

NANCY shrugged. "He wont go out of the picture, the poor sap. He keeps on writing, whether I answer or not." She looked penetratingly at her mother. "But I don't encourage him—I mean if I have a great career, I wouldn't think of giving it up for a man like Bruce—"

She paused thoughtfully. "I don't know about Bruce. You see, Mother, I certainly want to get married sometime. But I don't want to be rushed into it without seeing what I'm doing, and—I tell you—I want a man who has some work of his own, something he does awfully well, something that's worth doing, and—and that absorbs him—and that I can share in. I don't mean I want to work with him exactly—well, I'm a little hazy, I suppose, but I'd like to be a partner in his—in his *enthusiasms*, and his *ambitions*, and help him where I *can*—and have his work *mean* something. To him—and to me—and to whatever little world we live in. D'you get my idea?"

"I think so. I suppose you'll tell me when he comes along?"

"Rather. I'm not going to hurry, Mother. I'm going to be *sure*." She waited a moment, and blurted out what Effie wanted most of all to know. "Don't you get it in your head that Bruce is the fair-haired child of my affections. He isn't. But I will say that he was so darned decent and such a *lamb* that he queered Cop with me. He simply made Cop look the perfect twirp—but even so, I'm not at all sure that Bruce is according to my specifications. I'm going to take a whirl at working for myself—and look around—you know!"

Effie's heart was lighter than it had been for months, but she didn't want to go emotional before Nancy. "You're a good child to tell me all this," she said, "and I'll talk to your father about this stage scheme."

"Better wait till I'm all set. Then I can do a little buttering of his paws myself. It'll be easier to get around him if I've really landed, than if I just want to try it."

"When will you know?"

"I'll pop down there tomorrow morning and sit on Mr. Carson's doorstep till he takes me in."

"Don't be too disappointed if he sends you on to the orphan asylum."

"He wont," declared Nancy. "He hasn't got a chance!"

"I'm perfectly spineless about you, Nancy. I ought to speak to you seriously—"

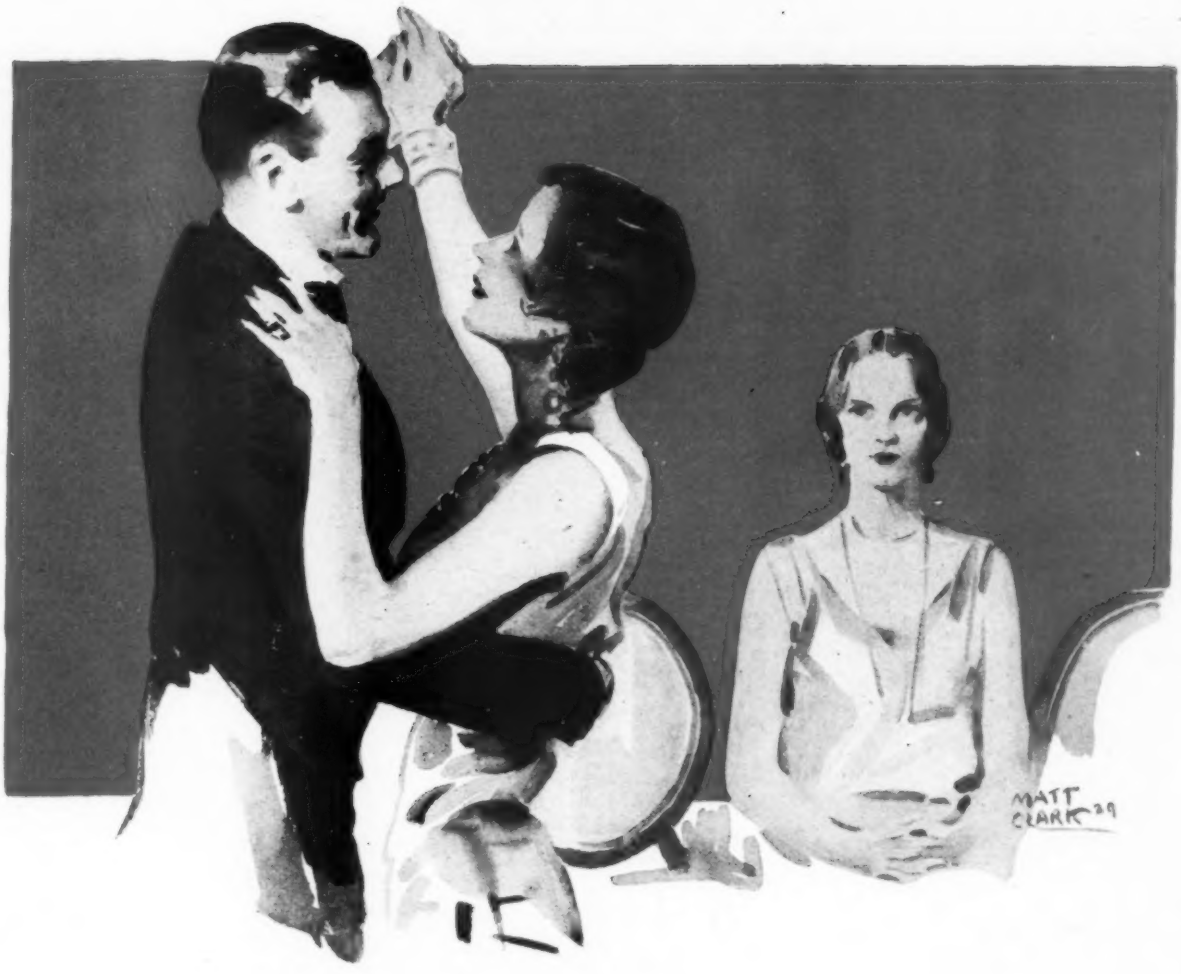
"Like Mrs. Villiers to Margery?"

"Exactly. I ought to point out to you the way you should go, and all that sort of thing. I ought to be firm! But somehow, my dear, I think you may know almost as much as I about what is wise for you to do, and I'm going to let you take your head, without any typical parental quakes and qualms. At least, if I have them I'll keep them to myself. But remember, I'm always here—and always thinking of you, and caring about you, any time you need me."

"And that," said Nancy, rubbing her black sleek head against Effie's shoulder, "is just what makes you so absolutely one-hundred-percent perfect, Mother!"

Chapter Thirty

BUT after Nancy had rushed blithely away to begin the day's round of parties, Effie felt a little conscience-stricken about keeping Walter in the dark about their daughter's



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newest activity. It seemed only fair that she should try at least to prepare his mind for it, though she couldn't tell him outright, because she had practically promised Nancy she wouldn't until it was settled. But he could begin to see that Nancy was looking for something more satisfying than dancing and suitors. He might take it very badly that she wanted to go on the stage; he would be disappointed about Copley Villiers. . . . . Effie sighed. Perhaps he'd not even bother to protest; he had been so remote from all his family interest recently, it was just possible that even his favorite's challenge of his plans and hopes for her would not stir him to sharp opposition. But however he met it, Effie felt that she ought not to seem to be conspiring with Nancy against him, for that was what it came to.

She looked over the calendar of her own day—luncheon with old Miss Stokes and two of her contemporaries, hairdresser, dress-fitting, two teas, dinner and the theater with some people named Grange who always gave jolly parties, with unusual guests. Effie thought she would do no more than show herself at the teas, and get home in time to dress and be at leisure to say a word or two to Walter before they started to the dinner. She meditated having Mrs. Thorndike telephone the bank and ask him to come home a few minutes earlier too, but decided against it. She didn't want to make Nancy's scheme important. She could surely get a word with him, merely start him thinking. . . . . .

She was tired when she came in, but her hot tub, and slow putting on of fresh clothes, restored her. There was a letter from James Terry, too, which helped. He was, he wrote, having the most tremendous fun with his skis. When she was ready Effie took this letter, thinking she would introduce the topic of the children by reading it to Walter. From James Terry she could easily go on to Nancy. And then she realized that it was almost seven and Walter had not come in. The dinner was to be promptly at seven-fifteen because of the theater afterward. It would take them ten minutes to get to the house. Even if Walter came in at once, he'd be much too hurried to pay any attention to her. She looked to see that his clothes were laid out, his studs and links in place, his tie, his handkerchief, his hat and scarf. He'd have to dress like a fire-horse.

The clock struck seven, and he had not come. Effie telephoned to the bank on the chance that there might have been a late meeting of some sort. The head night watchman assured her that there was not. Five minutes past seven! She picked up the phone again, irresolute. Should she call Mr. Bishop? Or should she call the one place where she felt sure she would find him, at Lora Evans'? And hadn't she better, first of all, call her hostess and on the plea of sudden dire illness excuse them both?

AS she wavered, she thought she heard his key in the lock. She dropped the telephone and ran out to the hall. "Oh, Walter," she began, "do hurry—we'll be disgracefully late!" Now she could see him clearly. He came in her line of vision—haggard, beaten, a limp rag-man, defeat and wretchedness in every line of him.

"What's the matter?" she cried. "Walter—what's the *matter?*"

He looked past her, did not move. She ran to him, caught his shoulders, shook him.

"What's happened? Tell me!" she demanded.

"I've been kicked out of the bank," he said at last. "The merger's gone through, and I'm kicked out."

"What d'you mean? Tell me about it. Tell me everything."

"Damn 'em to hell, the whole lot of cold-blooded money-grabbers!" he cried. "They threw me out with as little compunction as if I'd been the office bootblack! What do I care for an option on a block of stock, a sop to a child—"

Mechanically Effie saw that the clock stood at seven-fifteen. "Wait a minute," she said, "I've got to telephone to Mrs. Grange—" She paused and looked at him. *"No,"* she cried, "we'll go to that party and show them we don't give a whoop for what's happened at the bank—"

"I can't. I can't."

"You can. You've got to do it! You're not going to let them know you're licked—you're not licked—you're not going to sit down under this and whine—" She seized him and pulled him into his bedroom. "Here," she said, "hurry. You're going to that party, and you're going to be as easy and cheerful as any man there! Hurry—hurry!"

He began to fumble vaguely at his clothes, hypnotized by her energy. "But I can't, Effie, I can't," he said, his hands dropping.

"You've got to. Hurry, hurry! D'you want it to get around tomorrow that you were so down and out you couldn't even eat your dinner? Don't be an utter fool. And don't be a coward. My heavens, I'll forgive anything but that!" As she spoke, she was dragging his clothes off him, hanging them up. "Hurry, hurry! Brace up, act like a man, not a cry-baby. Get hold of yourself—there, wash your face and hands—"

She buttoned his collar, tied his tie. "We'll be a little late, but it wont matter," she went on. "The thing is to go there, to keep on with it, to act as if you didn't care, as if you'd got something much better up your sleeve. Haven't you any pride, Walter—or even common sense? Other men have lost jobs before now, but they didn't act as if they'd been pole-axed. Look what happened when you got out of the bank in Drochester—you landed something much better right away. You'll do it again; you've got to—"

He began to straighten up, to show spirit. "I'll try it," he said. "I'll try. Maybe you're right, Effie—only—"

"Only nothing! Come along now; you're ready. Chuck this out of your mind as if it hadn't happened and have a good time—"

SHE took hold of his limp hand as they went down in the elevator, but when they were in the car, she became aware that his hand was no longer limp; it was holding her own, tight, firm, the first spontaneous caress she had had from him for so many weary months, the first time he had seemed to need her, to like her nearness. "Walter, darling," she said, "I don't care what's happened—you can tell me tonight; but you're not going to give anybody a chance to think it matters a tinker's damn to you! Nor to me. If anybody says anything, look mysterious and tell 'em they don't know all yet. Keep your head up—be *yourself*—" The slang phrase came out like a sob, but there were no tears in her eyes. "You always liked a good fight—give 'em one!"

They went into the Granges' drawing-room at twenty-five minutes of eight, and right behind them was another couple even more tardy. The rush of excuses, the quick trooping out to the delayed meal, helped them through. Effie's cheeks were scarlet and her hands as cold as ice; she knew that their presence was creating a ripple, that people were talking about them, looking at them curiously. She listened to hear her own voice and lowered its key to serenity and calm; she relaxed and leaned back; and made her manner easy and gay. Now and then she glanced down the table at Walter, and saw that he was doing very well. The dinner was rapidly served, and they rushed off to the show, a noisy musical comedy which went at an exciting pace. It seemed to Effie to last for years, but at last it was over, and to her great relief no one insisted on a night-club, or dancing, or going to another party.

"And now," she said to Walter, when they were finally at home, "now let me hear everything, Walter—everything!"

IT was not, if she had known it, an unusual tale. Certain interests had cast covetous merger with another bank, with the Rasten Bank; their friends had been maneuvered on the board of directors, and the end was a merger with another bank with the Rasten people in diminished places. Villiers was to be president of the amalgamated institution, a figurehead title. The recalcitrant Burton would be the actual power, chairman of the board. In the changes a certain number of men were dropped—and Walter was one of these. He had been voted an option on a substantial block of stock which would fill his pockets generously; but his pride and his vanity had been dealt with callously.

It was a long story, and he told it badly, with spurts of indignation at the treatment he had received, with impatience at Effie's ignorance of technical details. But he was no longer the whipped creature who had come in at the door at seven-fifteen. Only, as he talked, Effie felt something untold, something unsaid which gave him a deeper, more unreasonable hurt.

"We're not so badly off," she told him. "You're getting out with what amounts to a decent little fortune. You're not the only man who left them, are you?"

"No—there were half a dozen besides me."

"And naturally, you're a comparative newcomer. I don't see why you need to feel it so much. You'll make another connection; I know it."

"I'm glad you know it. Nobody else seems to have any faith in me," he said with sudden harshness.

She guessed. She dared. She asked the question she had asked months before and he had answered so badly.

"By nobody else, you mean Mrs. Evans. Why should she be concerned about you in any way? Walter—*what is she to you?"*

He was so absorbed in his chagrin, he had such need of comfort and support, that caution and secrecy were lost. He blurted it out: "She's nothing to me. She's been stringing me along, telling me what a great man I am, and what a power I'm going to be downtown. Maybe she thought so—yes, she must have thought so, for when I went there tonight and told her about the bank, she was so angry—she was so disappointed—God, when I think of all she's got out of me! She turned on me and told me I was nothing but a jay, a small-towner—I'd never be anything else—"

"She wanted more money—that was why she was disappointed."

He nodded, his face turned from her. He was ashamed; he was afraid. But he was in such disequilibrium with life that he must tell it all, clear it out of himself. "Effie, she expected I'd be very rich—and though she didn't say it exactly, I know she thought—that in time you'd divorce me—and I'd marry her. And tonight—I hadn't told her about the stock—I'd only said that I was let out in the merger—and—and—she began to rave—"

HE paused. At first they had not talked as husband and wife, but as two honest and free souls, groping for each other. But now what he was saying made them both remember. He drew away, and Effie stood still.

All she had imagined was true, all—and more. She drew a long hard breath.

"It doesn't matter," she said at last. "We'll forget her. She's *out*—where she belongs."

"But Effie—don't you care? Don't you—you've been so bitter against her."

"I'm forgetting that bitterness, too."

She sat down on the arm of his chair, put her arm across his shoulder.

"I'm not God to forgive or not to forgive. We wont talk on those terms. I only know

you and I must live our lives together as well as we can, no matter what either of us has done. Walter, I'm terribly sorry about your disappointment, in the bank—but you weren't ever very happy there, were you?"

He shook his head.

"No, I wasn't. I'll tell you the truth, Effie. I was afraid all the time. I knew they were stronger than I was; I knew they didn't give a damn for me, and that they'd throw me out on my neck the minute I didn't suit their game. Oh, I tried to believe, at first, that I was as smart as they were, and could bluff 'em out, but it wasn't any use. I was a two-spot, and they never let me forget it. The dirt I've eaten, the awful uneasy, uncertain— I never was afraid of any set of men or any circumstances before in my life! But they're not men; they're machines, money machines; and if you get in their way you're ground to bits, that's all. Why, that old devil Parkinson was a prince of humanity compared to them. Lord, the squirming I've done!"

"But it's over now. You're your own man again. And at least you came out of it with a fair amount of money; they didn't pick your pockets."

"Yes, that's true. But what am I to do, what's to become of me?" His voice was dull and hopeless.

"You were happy when you were building up Parkinson's bank, weren't you? I mean," (she thought of Nancy's words), "that was a work of your own; you did it awfully well; it was worth doing; it meant something in the community."

"I suppose it did. In spite of Parkinson and his interference."

"Then why don't you go back and buy him out? He's probably sick of struggling along with young Willis; he's had a year of it; he must know it can't last."

"Go back to Drochester and have them all laughing at me? Fat chance! Are you crazy, Effie? I wouldn't consider it for a minute."

"They'd not laugh if you went back with enough capital to buy out Parkinson; they'd think you were mighty smart to have made so much down here in a year. You'd go back covered with glory. At least think it over, look into it a little. It seems foolish to me not to keep on in the business you've been so successful in, and as the head of the bank you'd have everything right in your own hands."

WALTER did not answer for a moment, but in his silence she read a lightening of his hopeless mood, a gleam of interest for the future. "Well, maybe—it wouldn't do any hurt to sound out the old chap—" he yielded doubtfully. He looked up at her, beseechingly. "Effie, I'm such a failure—every way. You're too good for me. I don't see how you can forgive—and—"

"You're not a failure. And as I said, we wont talk about forgiveness. You're just the same to me—I couldn't change if I wanted to."

Over his head she looked through the window across the great city, careless, greedy, wasteful, arrogant in its power to break the weak, instantly forgetful of those it shatters. Effie thought of her son who had escaped it, her daughter who had had its pleasures and seen their futility, and her husband who had so nearly wrecked himself and her against its sovereign puissance. Nearly—but not entirely. She thought of her long pain, her humiliations and misery borne in a bleak solitude of heart and soul. There might be much more to endure, but she knew that the worst days were over. Her arms tightened about Walter, she felt his arms about her; the wall was down, there was nothing more to divide them.

"New York didn't get us after all," said Effie. "Oh, Walter—I do love you!"

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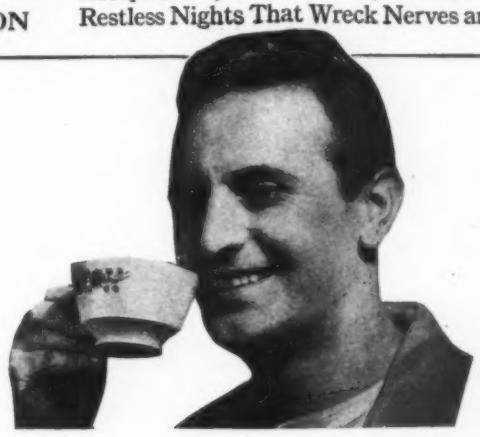

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LIFE'S TOUCHDOWNS

(Continued from page 75)

err by persisting in passing from under his own goal posts with a twenty-to-nothing lead. Once he fumbled, and Mullins recovered for a touchdown. Again, Notre Dame intercepted a Tech pass in midfield and began a drive which was stopped near the twenty-yard line. Had Notre Dame got away with that second touchdown with a second team in, it might have gone on to another inspirational victory—and the defeat would have been charged to Harpster's greed for scoring at the expense of ordinary tactics in the same situation, which call for a protection of a safe lead, particularly within your own territory.

THE vicious cycle of the under-dog psychology continued the next week when Carnegie lost its claim to Eastern and national honors by losing to New York University. Tech had incentive, but not as much as the Violet, which was smarting under a wet-field-fumble defeat by Georgetown, and saw in Carnegie an opportunity to regain prestige.

This issue was decided early, though it was not apparent at the moment. On one of its first plays Carnegie tried the end-around formation which had been so successful against Notre Dame. Al Lassman, gigantic captain of the Violent Violets, shot through the line and floored Rozensweig, who went down as though clubbed and was a negligible factor the rest of the afternoon. That tackle was credited by N. Y. U. players with winning the game. Strong did a lot of running that day, but the path was well-hewn for him by his teammates,—alive, vibrant, hard-hitting,—who hit their peak.

And finally the cycle was completed when N. Y. U., in line for recognition as the best team in the East, was outclassed by unheard-of Oregon State five days later on Thanksgiving Day. This was the biggest upset of them all, particularly as N. Y. U. rushed off to a quick touchdown. And in the light of what happened, consider the amusing conversation before the game when Paul Schissler, Oregon coach, petitioned Chick Meehan of the Violets:

"Several of my men are threatened with the flu. How about shortening the length of the periods so my team can last it out?"

Meehan agreed to shorten the second half if N. Y. U. had a safe lead at the end of the first. At that time, however, Oregon was leading twenty to six!

Two strategic plays stood out—the first changed the course of the game and led directly to the Oregon victory, and the second clinched it.

In the second period, Follet, N. Y. U. back, caught a punt on his thirty-yard line. Oregon was off-side, and the Violet had its choice of declining the five-yard penalty and putting the ball in play where Follet caught it—or of accepting the penalty and giving Oregon another chance to kick. The score at the time was six to nothing with N. Y. U. leading, and the obvious strategy was to decline the penalty and play safe, particularly as Strong was a much better punter than anybody on the Oregon squad.

But N. Y. U. accepted the penalty. Oregon kicked again—Follet fumbled; Oregon recovered near the goal-line and started a brilliant offensive which netted three quick touchdowns. Faulty judgment by their opponents proved the spark which lit up the morale of the Oregon boys.

Trailing twenty to six at the beginning of the second half, N. Y. U. started to recover. Strong punted out of bounds on the Oregon two-yard line, and it seemed inevitable that the Violet would soon score and regain control of the game. But Howard Maple, who did as fine a job of quarterbacking that day as has ever been achieved on the gridiron, was hot. He had been trying everything, and everything was going. So while N. Y. U. was massing to block a punt, Maple, standing one yard back of center, daringly rushed through the weak side of his line with hardly any interference—the play depended upon surprise for its strength—and scampered forty yards along the side-lines before he was caught.

That play quenched the renewed Violet fire and restored Oregon morale. In three more plays Maple had scored another touchdown and N. Y. U. was through—tired, stale and unable to reach down within itself for sufficient energy to cope with the fiery opposing team which had now hit its peak and was whirring.

Luckily for Oregon, its season was over and it was not forced upon the altar of sacrifice to satisfy another ambitious team hitting its peak. Carnegie and N. Y. U. faced winters of gloom. Notre Dame lost to Southern California. Army forced itself to the limit to whip Nebraska, and then had nothing left to defend against the powerful Stanford squad. Yale sloughed off badly and was humiliated by Harvard, which had come along slowly and hit its high spot on the exact day planned. Southern Methodist went downhill all the way to the season's end.

The story was repeated throughout the gridiron world. The under-dog was a mad dog, sinking his foamy teeth into undefeated squads and spoiling perfect records. Navy stopped Princeton. Minnesota checked Wisconsin. California tied Southern California.

Our movie ends at the Tournament of Roses with an excited boy, fired with the holy flame of devotion to alma mater, running madly toward the wrong goal, and by this maneuver crowning Georgia Tech as a national champion—which seems to reduce that title to a *reductio ad absurdum*—which is about where it belongs. For football, in these years, is very much a matter of poise on a particular day.

On the day it hits its peak, a major football squad is probably the best in the land; but it gives so much to attain that peak it must inevitably slump thereafter. Occasionally a squad appears which goes through a hard season undefeated and can summon enough reserve to win on its days of low morale—but we haven't seen one since Knute Rockne's Four Horsemen of 1924.

HOW is football science related to the business of living?

How is your physical condition? You've got to be in shape if you're going to fight your way along and keep some ambitious sophomore from taking your job—and then you must also be able to cope with the job itself.

You know how lack of condition, lassitude and fatigue slow you up. Perhaps you require only exercise and are too lazy to take it. Or it may be that you will not give up drinking or smoking to excess. Each man knows his own problem. Think it over—and remember that those young men trailing glory out on the field have been denying themselves luxuries and burdening themselves with proper exercise, even giving up vacation periods, so that they will be able to play the game hard. Chris Cagle is a great star primarily because he can stand the gaff—barring serious injuries, he is in that line-up every day, at practice or in games.

How are your fundamentals? A football player spends hours every day learning the little things about his job, small things like starting on his right foot on this play and his left foot on that one. He is taught a number of methods to use in combating types of play his opponents may use—certain types of blocking to use in different situations. He may think that he is well polished in prep school; but when he comes to college, he does it all over again—falling on the ball, tackling, blocking, stiff-arming, punting, passing—hours upon hours with no admiring crowd to inspire him and only the voice of a sarcastic coach to soothe his tired being. And he must know what his teammates are doing on every play so that he will not inadvertently jam things up by getting in another man's path.

Do you study your job and rehearse all of the little things until you might even do them instinctively? Johnny Chevigny saved the greatest game of his career when out of his head.

Honesty, integrity, truthfulness, all of the homely virtues, are fundamentals in living—just as important to your boss as weight, speed and adequate mentality are to a football coach. If you don't have them, you will be kicked off the squad.

Perhaps you have trouble getting along in your work because you are too sensitive, don't like to be told things, can't stand being bossed—in other words, *discipline*.

The boys on the field have to stand for it and like it; and they become better players because of it. No superior anywhere is apt to be more caustic or demanding than a football coach. He is judged by the team he puts on the field and the way it acts—and in his practice sessions he must make certain that every man knows his job, because once the team gets on the field, the coach cannot communicate with it; and if one man muffs his assignment, the play, perhaps the game, perhaps the season, may go awry. The Army game took a lot out of Yale last year—and it was lost by defective end-play and poor tackling. The coach is working for the same end as the player; he should be impersonal, and is apt to be, until the player injects the personal angle by becoming resentful. The same is true in business.

One of the first things Knute Rockne does every year is to spot the boy who comes to college with a scrap-book of his high-school triumphs and acts accordingly.

If you are playing on a team or in a business organization, play the game. If your part happens to be that of a lineman who merely mops up while everybody watches the man carrying the ball, that is your part to play. Don't spoil the play because you are jealous of the star or resentful toward the boss. Business, like football, demands eleven men in every play.

Football scouts its opponents, knows what to expect of them in general and prepares defenses and offenses accordingly. Notre Dame stopped Cagle and prepared a play against Navy. N. Y. U. was ready for the end-around Carnegie formation which had defeated Notre Dame. Any smart football team should be able to size up an opposing formation quickly, figure its strong points and prepare to meet them before the ball is snapped.

Business likewise scouts its competitors and inspects the various general schemes of play.

Do you specialize in offense or defense? No team ever got anywhere without an offense; but no offense can offset a weak defense. Notre Dame scored on Army with two minutes to go; but its defense was intelligent and courageous enough to fight off the determined Army attack. What is an offense? It is an intelligent method of using your ability. It is tactics.

EVERY man trying to get somewhere in the world is his own quarterback—calls his signals and determines what he must do next. A quarterback should be smart—he should know his business, study it, study his opponents, pit strength against their weak-

ness. A good quarterback knows what to do and when to do it—and he has certain general rules to guide him which are sufficient for the average man.

He plays the percentage. All things being equal, he does the thing which will give the most return at the time. In the early stages of the game, he plays things safe in his own territory and takes no foolish chances.

Suppose you receive the ball on the kick-off. What play? The wise thing to do is to start your ordinary running attack and see what it gets you. The wrong thing to do is to begin throwing passes in your own territory. Why? Because when you throw a pass you give the other fellow an opportunity to intercept the ball, and if he intercepts it in your territory, he has a chance to drive through for a quick touchdown and an early dominance which puts the issue up to you thereafter. Being ahead, he can play safe; being behind, you must take the risks—and he will be waiting to capitalize your risks.

Football teaches you to play safe until you get a break; if the break doesn't come after a reasonable length of time, then you can take more chances and force the break; if you get behind early in the game, you are coached not to get too reckless in trying to even the score at once; but if you are behind in the second half, shoot the works, take every chance.

In other words, when things are going well, don't take chances; let the other fellow do it; but when you have everything to gain and nothing much to lose—gamble. Remember that most games are won by a strong, safe running attack—sane, vigorous, consistent use of ability.

A quarterback must take into account the condition of the field, direction and velocity of the wind, and direct his play accordingly. He should diversify his attack, keep the other fellow guessing, stick to his basic game as long as it is going well; and when the other fellow begins to mass before the running game and leaves an opening for a pass, the quarterback should throw a pass into the opening and force his opponent to spread his strength. Football strategy is nothing more than common sense; it has the same checks and balances that our governmental system has.

All the average successful man has is common sense.

COURAGE is assumed in football; but what is it, really? Nothing more than a combination of the things we have been talking about. Most of it is physical condition. A man can take a beating if he is prepared for it; mostly, if he knows he has taken it before. Much of it is confidence—and confidence rests largely in the knowledge that you know your job and will be able to handle any situation that arises. Loyalty will keep a man on the job after he feels like quitting. We have been talking a lot about incentive and how it transformed boys into holy warriors; what more incentive does the average man need than to win for himself and family? You know what you are fighting for—you can see them. A college boy is out there giving the best in him for some hazy conception which he calls alma mater; but he is never quite sure what it is.

Football teaches you to make the other fellow feel you're there to the end and will beat him; if you muff a play, forget it; keep your head up and go after the next one. If things go badly, figure out intelligently why it happened, and take advantage of your mistake instead of whining about hard luck. Take it and come back swinging; if he knocks you blear-eyed on the first play, give it to him on the next—maybe he'll quit and you wont have to. The difference between dying gamely and fighting to live may often be just one more play, as it was for Notre Dame—a play which your active mind had figured out years ago for just such an

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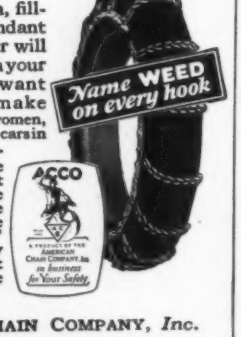
A smashed car means a repair bill and probably someone painfully hurt. Women, as a rule, realize these things quicker than men. They don't take the chances that men foolishly do. That's why you see so many WEED Chains on cars that women drive. That's why women drivers are involved in only 1 out of 23 accidents.

For the new driver:

Any garage man, filling station attendant or taxicab driver will be glad to put on your chains. They want you to help make driving safe for women, and thus keep more cars in use the year around.

You can purchase WEED Chains at any place where auto accessories are sold. Look for the name "WEED" stamped on every hook to be sure that they are genuine WEEDS.



AMERICAN CHAIN COMPANY, *Inc.*
Bridgeport, Connecticut

WEED CHAINS

emergency, a play made possible because, like Johnny O'Brien, you had given a lot of time to developing a peculiar talent.

Life is full of "breaks" like that. Rudy Vallee took a megaphone, saxophone and a catch in an ordinary voice, kept on fighting to live, and the first thing he knew he had sax appeal and a fortune. There's a long story behind every winning game of life, just as there is behind every football game.

Football develops poise—which is nothing more than being able to call the right signal at the right time, to act calmly and think calmly while eighty thousand people are rioting, to do the right thing at the right time despite the contrary wishes of nerves which may want to blow up under pressure. And this poise, ability to throw the pass in exactly the right spot, as Johnny Niemiec did in his big moment, was not a Herculean victory over nerves and emotion, but just as much a triumph of instinct and long practice as was Chevigny's recovery of the loose ball. Which brings us back to the long, patient toil of the practice fields, of doing the same thing over and over until it becomes such a habit that it is difficult not to do it even under emotional and nervous pressure—which is nothing more than experience.

THERE remains the question of pace, of knowing when to hit your peak, of taking ordinary events in your stride without getting excited about them, of retaining your fund of emotional energy until you reach the big game that is really important—and then priming yourself so that you will be invincible on that day.

Above all, football demands fair play. By "fight to live" Rockne means hard, clean, intelligent fighting inspired by a winning psychology. No coach of any importance teaches illegal play. If he gets a reputation like that, he has trouble scheduling games; his team is often put in bad holes by penalties; and dirty football interferes with intelligent play.

So more and more today the game of football, as the game of life, is played squarely and fairly.

THE HICK

(Continued from page 83)

make. I picked up the dice and wiped off the taffy so they wouldn't get stuck on seven. Then I made the eight."

"But you might have lost that roll," I insisted.

"Uh, huh," said Jerry. "But if I had lost it, it was all velvet. You noticed that I pinched out my own ten dollars the first time I won."

"Well," I laughed, "that's certainly a new one, anyhow."

"You'll change your mind," remarked Jerry, "if you try to get away with it in Cheyenne or North Platte."

"All right, Cock Robin," I said. "Just keep on fooling around Chicago and you'll learn something that is new. I ought to take a vacation and look after you, but I can't. I've got to be at work in half an hour. What are you going to do this afternoon?"

"I think I'll walk around and look at things for a while," answered Jerry. "I got a date with a jane at eight o'clock. Met her in the lobby at the hotel. We're going to a show tonight."

"Good *night!*" I cried. "You'd better hike right over to the hotel and put that roll you won in the safe, old kid! You're fixing to keep out of trouble just like a fish keeps out of water."

"I aim to salt away a hundred dollars of it," grinned Jerry, as we parted at the corner of Clark and Madison. "I'll see you again before I start home."

All afternoon and evening, between intervals of work, I wondered about Jerry. I reproached myself for not taking steps to see that he was looked after. Now and then I chuckled as I thought of the taffy-and-dice episode.

At about nine o'clock the city editor called over to me that Ned Boone, our police reporter, was on the wire with a story. I grabbed some copy paper and turned to the telephone. As rewrite man, it was my job to take the facts telephoned in by reporters and weave them into a tale.

"Hello," said Boone's voice. "Here's some dope that you ought to be able to make a whiz of a yarn out of."

I smiled, thinking that the stories, as they were shot at me over the phone, were so often infinitely better than anything I could hope to get into print. Boone's dope proved that sort. Therefore I give it here as he gave it to me.

"OUR friend Pink Jordan is jugged again," began the reporter. "Seems like he thought himself up some new ideas while he was in Joliet the last time. He appears to have figured out a way to take most of the risks out of the stick-up game. He got a couple of good-looking molls to help him, and they've been cleaning up with a new stunt. They blow into a town and rent a two- or three-room apartment for a week. Then the two queens get out and get busy. They wander around and make dates with about twenty likely-looking saps for Saturday afternoon and night. They have the saps coming to the apartment at half-hour intervals all afternoon and evening. The molls have the suckers dated for expensive dance-halls and places like that, so the boobs will be sure to have a nice roll on 'em. As the gents arrive, they are greeted by the gal they didn't date. She tells them to come in and wait for a few moments—that her sister is dressing.

"The boob steps inside and the gal shuts the door. Then Pink steps out with a gat in his hand, and they shoo the sucker into the bedroom.

"There they tie the sap up good and tight and put a gag in his face. They take everything of value off him and leave one of the janes on guard while Pink and the other one go out to greet the next boob.

"They usually get a thousand dollars or more off eighteen or twenty Romeos, so Pink says. They've been pulling their stunt in first one city and then another for six months. As soon as they have their birds all picked, they grab their bags and jump in their car and leave town for new pastures. By the time the guys they leave trussed up in the apartment get loose, Pink and his gals are miles on their way.

"Tonight they had all but two of their suckers roped up when in walks a lemon—otherwise a rooster from the wild and woolly West. This guy, so Pink says, has a date with one of the molls to take her to a show and to a dance afterward. He's a husky young yahoo, built on the general lines of a Goliath.

"They let him in and shut the door on him, but when Pink pops up with the gun this bozo goes into action. He reaches out his left arm and grabs the gal, who is standing near. He hugs the frill in front of him for a shield and jumps at Pink. He has his jump well aimed, and him and the gal hit Pink like a ton of brick. Just as they start to go down in a heap, this Western guy's fist comes from somewhere and connects with Pink's jaw. Pink flies over into a corner, where his head hits a radiator and the birdies begin to sing. Then the other dame hears the rumpus and comes running out of the back room waving a gun.

"This holy terror throws the gal he is holding at the one with the gun and makes a bull's-eye. Both gals go down in a heap, and the yahoo walks over and picks the gat out of the heap. Then he drags Pink and shoos the molls into the other room, where fifteen guys gathered in during the afternoon are laid out in rows on the floor and the bed. This bozo cuts the ropes off one of the saps and hands him the gun, telling him to keep his eye on the gals and Pink and turn the other bimbos loose. Then this prize package from the wide open spaces fades out of the picture.

"First thing the suckers do when they get loose is to try to find the stuff that's been taken off them. They find their watches and jewelry, but no money. Then they telephone for the cops. The wagon goes out and brings in the whole bunch. Here at the station they tell their yarns to the dicks. Pink swears that when the cyclone struck he had about thirty-two hundred bucks in his pockets. The cops frisk all the guys, and Pink and the molls, and don't find a dime. So they decide that the cyclone has the money. The gal informs them his name is Bartlett—"

"I thought so," I put in.

"You stop thinking until I give you this story," snapped Boone. "As I was saying, the gal says his name is Jerry Bartlett and he's stopping at the Tonty. The cops rush over and grab him just as he is asking for his key. They bring him over to the station and search him. He don't shell out but forty dollars. They find out he has two hundred dollars in the office safe at the hotel, but the manager swears that it was put there hours ago. A squad goes out and ransacks the apartment again, but find no mazuma. By this time the cops are baffled, —be sure to get that in,—so they check up on all the suckers and turn 'em loose, including this Nebraska bundle of poison ivy. Pink and the gals are in the brig, still swearing that they had the money. That's all —except that you might get a picture of Young Wild West by shooting a photographer over to the Tonty Hotel."

I STUCK my notes in my typewriter and went over and told the city editor what Boone had said about a photograph. Then I went back to my desk and began to write my story.

Just as I was finishing it, a boy came to inform me that a fellow named Jerry Bartlett was asking for me at the door.

"Bring him in," I yelled.

The boy jumped, and in a few moments Jerry was standing before my desk. I handed my story to the boy to be taken to the city desk.

"Well, Peaceful Percy!" I said. "There goes a story for the front page about how you behave when you call upon your girl friends."

"Is that so!" grinned Jerry. "Well, a guy from your paper was just over to the hotel to get my picture. I told him I had to come over here anyhow, so I'd come and ask you if I had to let him take it."

"Sure you have to," I declared, grabbing him by the arm and starting him for the art department. "Come back to my desk after they get through with you."

Shortly after I got back from the art-room, Nell Barnes, dressed to leave the office, came and seated herself on the corner of the desk.

"What do you want?" I demanded.

"I'm waiting for Mr. Bartlett," smiled our star society reporter.

"You'll have a long wait," I told her. "As soon as the art department mugs him, I'm going to have him locked up and wire his father to come get him."

"You and who else?" inquired Nell.

Before I could frame a retort, Jerry loomed at Nell's shoulder. Nell looked up with what I suppose I should term a dazzling smile.

"Say, you blundering baboon!" I growled at him. "You stick around here until I get through. I'm going to take you under my wing until you get out of town."

"Can't do it," grinned Jerry. "I'm going to take Miss Barnes out to a roadhouse."

"How long do you think you'll last at a roadhouse with forty dollars?" I demanded. "And I'm going to telephone the hotel that you are a psychopathic case and they must not let you have that money you have in the safe."

"I'll tell you a secret," said Jerry, leaning down. "Miss Barnes has thirty-two hundred dollars that belongs to me. I stopped and gave it to her before I went to the hotel—for fear I might get pinched, later on."

"How'd you give it to her?" I asked. "I never saw you come in the office."

"I called her on the telephone," chuckled Jerry. "She came down and met me just inside the street door."

"Is this true?" I asked, glaring at Nell.

"Yes," she cooed. "He gave it to me—and it's down in the office safe. It's going to stay there too. Mr. Bartlett could take me out every night for a week on his forty dollars."

"Young lady," I said sternly, "do you know where that money came from?"

"I surely do," answered Nell. "And I'm quite proud of Mr. Bartlett. He told me all about it when I went downstairs to meet him. He asked my advice as to what he should do with it."

"And you advised him to keep it?"

"I did. What would you have had him do? Those eggs who lost it had the same chance Jerry did—but they didn't do anything. If they were to get it back, they'd just lose it again."

"Nell, Nell," I reproached, "where are your high ideals—and everything?"

"You forget," retorted Nell, "that I have spent seven years of my plastic youth among newspaper men."

"Go on with your fair-haired boy," I snorted. "And I only hope that you both get pinched."

Nell took Jerry's arm and they departed, laughing back at me as they reached the door.

I slept late Sunday, arriving at the office a few minutes after two. I found a note on office stationery in the mail-rack. It was from Nell Barnes, and it read:

"Dear Joe:

"It is too early to disturb you by calling you up, so Jerry and I are leaving this note to let you know that I am taking Jerry back to Nebraska before he gets into trouble.

"We are going to be married in North Platte, Monday. Don't you think I will be a wow as a rancher's wife? Jerry says to tell you we expect you to come out and see us next fall. He says he'll take a week off to hunt prairie chicken with you.

"Tell all the gang good-by for me. I left my resignation on the boss' desk.

"Nell."

As I finished reading the note, Bob Meade paused beside my desk.

"When are you going to let me sell Grant Park to your cow-puncher friend?" grinned Bob. "I need a little extra money."

"Listen," I told him. "If you tried to sell your park to that gorilla, he'd trade you the Black Hills for it and get your pay-check to boot."

MY telephone rang before Bob had time to retort. I picked up the receiver and barked a "Hello."

"'Lo, Joe," came Boone's voice over the phone. "Has Nell Barnes been in?"

"I haven't seen her today," I said truthfully. "Why?"

A King's illness and Your COLD

VERY dramatically, the recent illness of a great ruler focused attention on the calcium content of the blood. It is rumored that a Knighthood is in prospect for the young biochemist who prescribed and administered calcium to His Majesty.

If you are troubled with frequent and recurring colds, although nose and throat seem perfect, your blood, too, is probably deficient in calcium. To restore the normal alkaline balance take FELLOWS' Syrup. It supplies calcium in a most assimilable form, in addition to four other vital mineral elements needed by the body, and two dynamic ingredients.

This explains why physicians in 58 countries consider FELLOWS' the winter tonic without equal. When you are physically and mentally let-down, it "picks you up." It promotes appetite, aids digestion, soothes nerves. Abounding vitality returns. Energy revives. Handicaps disappear. If you feel below par, ask your own family physician. He is probably among those who regularly prescribe this fine old tonic.

FELLOWS' Laxative Tablets, a vegetable compound, are mild and effective.

THE TONIC

FELLOWS' SYRUP

"Well," answered Boone, "the cops are looking for our Nell."

"What's she done?"

"I gather she's been in bad company," replied the reporter. "She and some bozo were at the Blue Bear roadhouse last night when it was raided. When the law walked in, Nell's boy friend grabbed Nell and made a dive through a back window. They started to run and bumped into a couple of bulls. Nell's friend kicked one of the cops gently in the tummy and threw his fist at the other one. The one he walloped is in the hospital with a broken jaw. They don't know who the guy was, but Nell was recognized. They're looking for her to get a line on her boy friend. You might tip her off."

"Don't worry," I answered. "Nell is with us no longer. She left this morning on her honeymoon."

"The devil!" cried Boone. "Who'd she marry?"

"The wild man of Borneo," I informed him, hanging up the receiver. . . . .

Any outside talent that hereafter invades the comparative quiet of Chicago will not do so at my personal invitation.

KING'S CREW

(Continued from page 55)

When he was gone, Duveen examined the letter carefully and then called Dave out of his retirement.

"It seems all right."

Dave looked at the outer envelope also. "Can't tell." He opened it and drew out the second envelope, the bloodstained one, which had been addressed by Hélène to him.

He found the almost colorless strand of Hélène's hair under the envelope flap—their secret seal.

"I think this letter has not been opened," he said with a sigh of relief. "Is the door locked?" He hesitated a moment before tearing the flap.

"I don't know," Duveen replied. "I'll look and see."

She went to the door and tried to turn the key, but it stuck.

"I can't turn it, Dave," she said. "Come and see what's the matter."

Dave stepped to the door, but as he did so, it opened of its own accord.

Mr. Morse stood there with his hands in his pockets.

"NEVER mind about locking the door, folks. The bell-hop stuck some adhesive over it when he brought you the letter. I thought it would make it easier for me to come in, so that we could just read the letter together. It probably explains a lot of things."

Neither Dave nor Duveen said anything in reply. They stood aghast at the disaster which had overtaken them.

"You might almost have known that I'd come after you," Morse reproved the girl mildly.

She recovered her composure.

"Thank you." She smiled at the detective. "But how did you manage to find me in this room?"

"As Mrs. Kirby Smith? Elementary. The letter was addressed to Mrs. Smith, and I brought it with me—delivered it in person, so to speak. I thought there might be something interesting in it, especially after I steamed open the outside envelope and found the one with the blood-stains on it, addressed to Mr. David King."

"You didn't open this one," Dave said fiercely.

"No, I thought I might need it later to help me locate you. But now that we're all here together, I should think the best way would be to read it out loud."

Dave clenched his fists.

"Of course," suggested Morse, "you know that I'm armed. I only asked you to read it aloud yourself so that if there is anything of a private nature in there, it wouldn't be quite so embarrassing. I will allow you to suppress all words such as *darling, dearest* and similar written expressions of the biological urge."

"What if I wont do it?"

The detective regarded the two of them with mild perplexity. "Gosh, I hadn't thought of that."

Of a sudden Duveen's eye lighted with a strange gleam, but she did not even look toward the door, which stood partly open and which now swung noiselessly to its full extent.

"I guess you'll have to give me the letter," Morse ordered apologetically. "I hate to do this stage stuff, but here are my credentials." He exhibited the police revolver which he carried strapped under his left arm. "Just drop the letter right there," he directed, "and put your hands up as high as you can without discomfort, while I telephone for local assistance."

Both Duveen and Dave did as they were told, but as the detective started for the telephone, his right arm was grabbed by the wrist in a grip so viselike that he had to relax. The gun dropped with a soft thud on the carpet.

GEORGE picked it up and put it into his own pocket. "If you'll promise not to make any noise, I wont pry your teeth apart with this."

He turned apologetically to the other two. "I hope I'm not butting in," he said with a grin.

"Not at all, Mr.—er—er—" Dave fumbled at the name. "I don't believe we've been introduced."

"His name is Porter," supplied Duveen briskly, "George Porter."

"Welcome, George," greeted Dave. "But never mind shaking hands. Just sit down somewhere and hold Mr. Morse on your lap while we try to think out what to do next."

"Read the letter," suggested the detective. "That's what I'm here to find out about, and it may be that an immediate answer is required. I wont yell for help or even try to get away until after I've heard what Mrs. Tremayne has to say."

"You wont?" Dave regarded him with sardonic tolerance. "What makes you think that I'll let you look at this or hear what's in it?"

"I dunno. I thought you would. You might even want some one to go to her help while you're in jail. From the way that message was delivered, and from the trouble somebody took to keep it from getting into your hands, I judge it's pretty important. You'd better read it now, while you've got a chance, because there's a couple of detectives in the corridor and some more out the window with orders to come in if I don't come out in ten minutes."

"A good bluff," returned Dave admiringly.

"Your error," Morse returned with equanimity. "No bluff. Look out the window. You can see the ones that are in the patio."

"Not interested."

But Duveen was. "There are a couple of men outside with 'city slicker' clothes on."

"What of that?" demanded Dave.

"Well," Duveen returned, "all the hotel guests would be wearing white flannels at this time of day. These men don't look like servants."

"Good work," applauded the detective. "Your sister could get a job on the force any time if I were chief of police. Those are my own men all right, and I'll bet one of them looks at his watch inside of a minute. If you want to read that letter, yourself, you'd better be getting to it."

DAVE apparently decided to take his advice. Slowly he slit open the bloodstained envelope and drew from it a soiled and crumpled piece of white cardboard, folded in the middle and printed rather like a program. There was writing on the back, however, and David scanned it eagerly as one drinks who has been long without water.

"Well?" said the detective after a moment.

Dave handed him the card. "What do you think of it?"

The detective read the note rather hastily, then turned the piece of cardboard over and studied the other side intently for a moment.

"What I make of it," he said, "is that I've got to hurry."

"What do you mean, you?" Dave demanded sharply.

"Just that—me! The representative of the Los Angeles Police Department," said the detective. "And I wish there was a dozen more."

"How about taking your flat-footed friends from the hall and patio?"

Horace Morse grinned.

"I never saw those gentlemen before."

HE now looked out the window for the first time. "They must be a couple of new arrivals who haven't had time to change to their flannel panties yet. I just guessed they'd be there."

"Then you're still in our power?" said Duveen hopefully.

"In a manner of speaking," the detective admitted. "But just for the moment, let's lay our guns on the table and take off our diamond-studded handcuffs while we look at this thing."

"What makes you think there's any hurry?" asked George, who hitherto had taken no part in the discussion, but had constituted himself solely a part of the physical background to the detective, moving when he moved, standing behind him like a shadow when he stood still.

"Because, unless I've read the signs all wrong, the curtain has at last gone up on the real stage-setting and we are playing marbles with a gentleman by the name of Rosario, and he doesn't care who gets hurt. He thinks fast, and he knows by now that you've received this message. The only thing he doesn't know is what the message is; but if I'm right and it is Rosario, he'll be trying to find out in a very short while."

"A short while?" George repeated. "How long is a short while in this case?"

"Several hours, perhaps several minutes. That depends on how closely he's watching you people. It's a cinch he knows you're here, and has only been waiting for all of you to get together so that he can be sure of hitting everybody with one barrel."

Duveen took the cardboard from the detective's hand, then looked inquiringly at her brother. "May I read it?"

"Yes," he consented absently.

The note on the back was:

Darling:

Come. Hurry. The bearer will tell you where to find me.

Ta Belle.

Duveen read the note without comment and then turned it over.

It was a racing chart from the track at Tia Juana, Mexico, of the Sunday before. There were a few random pencil-marks on it, and one of the entries was checked. Still, there was nothing to which she would have been inclined to attach any sinister significance.

"What and why?" she asked simply.

"Is the handwriting authentic?" the detective asked David.

"Yes."

"And the signature, *'Ta Belle'?* Is that a pet name?"

"Yes."

"No one else knew it?"

"No. The letter was written by Hélène, all right."

"But the man she sent it by, who was to tell you how to reach her, was killed. I suppose they tried to intercept him but only managed to catch up with him when he got to your door."

Morse grinned at Duveen. "Naturally I figured out how this note got into your possession. You ought to have told me about it in the first place, but I don't think it would have made any difference, anyway."

"You think she is in danger?" David persisted anxiously.

"Either that, or she thinks you are."

"I?" David was puzzled. "From what?"

"From me, probably," Morse interpreted modestly, "or at least from the law of the land which I represent."

"But surely this note," Duveen said, "removes any doubt as to my brother's innocence."

"No. It may mean simply that they were accomplices in a plot but did not get away together. Now she wants him to come to her."

"No, no!" Duveen protested.

"Well, perhaps not. But we have to take all interpretations into account. The district attorney will."

"And choose the most unfavorable," added David not bitterly but wisely.

"It is the assumption that I should make myself if I had not looked on the other side of that card she used for note-paper."

"Will it be all right if you explain why?" Duveen asked.

MORSE laughed. "Sure. Look here." He pointed with a pencil to one of the marks on the racing chart.

"Rio Rose," Duveen read. "Seems to be the name of a mare entered in the third race."

"It's more than that. It's the name of a horse owned by Rosario. Everything that belongs to him is called by some variation or translation of his own name—or at least that's the story the way we have it. There's a motor-cruiser, the fastest ghost on the West Coast—can do forty-five miles an hour on a damp sidewalk—named *Rose of the Rio,* and an airplane that he calls *Rosenfluss.* The fact that the name of the horse is checked may be a coincidence, but I'll bet my Easter bonnet that it has more meaning than all of the letter on the other side."

"Who is Rosario?" Duveen demanded.

"Never mind about that, kid; I've heard of him." Dave forestalled any lengthy explanation. "He's a dope- and immigrant-smuggler on a big scale who operates from Mexico somewhere and makes a lot of money at it. —Where is his headquarters?" Dave himself asked that question.

Detective Morse shook his head. "I don't know. The Federal authorities may have some information bearing on his activities, but they haven't bulletined it to us. The theory is that he shifts all along the coast of Lower California from Enseñada to La Paz on the West Coast and in the Gulf. Most of the stories we hear about him sound like press-agent pipe-dreams prepared by himself. As a matter of fact, no one has ever interviewed him in person or has ever seen him. As far as I know, he seldom crosses the line into United States territory although we hear about his being in Paris and the Orient frequently. He trades in pearls, among other things. He may be merely a mythical dummy behind which a group of individuals act. I don't hold to that theory myself. Transactions bearing the Rosario trade-mark are

Now! You can be radiant and vital in the evening: *after an exhausting day!*

NO MATTER how exhausting your day, how fatiguing your business, shopping or social hours—your evenings can always be radiant and vital when you revivify your body as do the smart women of Paris.

FLORAL
EAU DE COLOGNE
"A BODY LOTION"
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JOLI SOIR (Gloaming) · JASMIN · MIMOSA
FOUGÈRE (Royal Fern) · LILAS · ROSE
LAVANDE · VIOLETTE
POIS DE SENTEUR (Sweet Pea) · CHYPRE
MUGUET

Pat cool, soothing dashes of Cheramy's Floral Eau de Cologne on your skin. Thrill at its electric response, its tingling shock, the vigor of its contact. Your skin grows supple, soft—a glowing, elastic glove for stretching, youthful muscles.

Now you are radiant and vital. Your whole being is fragrant with the seductive essence of Cheramy's floral odeurs. You are ready for the night—and the night's rich pleasures.

A generous flacon of Cheramy's Floral Eau de Cologne, containing several applications, will be sent you free—that you may learn to be ever radiant and vital as are the smart women of Paris. Just mail the coupon below.

CHERAMY, Inc., Dept. D 3
539 West 45th Street, New York City
You may send me without charge, a trial flacon of Cheramy Floral Eau de Cologne—a new Lotion for the body.

Please designate perfume desired.....

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State.....

too damn' clever, and his plans shift too rapidly, to be anything but the product of one single chain-lightning brain."

David was not listening with particular attention to Morse's characterization of the amiable brigand Rosario. Instead, he was busy with his own constructive thoughts.

Finally he broke in with his conclusions.

"So you think that Rosario or one of his agents killed Mr. Tremayne and kidnaped his wife because she was a witness."

"Something like that."

"But why abduct Hélène, I wonder? Wouldn't it have been easier simply to kill her too?"

The detective smiled. "From what I've learned of Mrs. Tremayne, she is the sort of woman no man would kill—except perhaps her jealous husband or her accepted lover."

"Meaning by that?" Dave moved toward him a trifle menacingly. George behind the detective stiffened to more alert attention.

Duveen interposed. "Take the sand-burrs out of your bronchial tubes, darling. Mr. Morse only means that she is too lovely for any man who has an eye for beauty ever to want to destroy."

"Certainly," conceded Morse placatingly. "I couldn't have explained it that way, but it's just what I mean."

"I'm very good at explaining things," Duveen admitted with becoming modesty.

George, who watched Duveen's every move, even when she only agitated her lips, wanted to chime in with applause and, "You said it, heart of my heart," only he didn't know words like that; and besides, he remembered in time that he had only a sort of amateur standing in this company and he could not risk impairing it or perhaps being expelled entirely from the worshiper's pew.

George was adding, every minute, to his painful education in the fact that the human man-heart never causes its owner any trouble until a message comes in on exactly the right wave-length. He adored this star girl so many ways, as a woman, as a child, as a picture, as a playmate, as a sort of a goddess and as a much-to-be-desired comrade. His ambition in life was solely to be admitted one day to an intimacy somewhere a few steps lower than that to which her brothers were entitled by right of birth.

Instinctively George recognized that he could never gain the step upon which David and Stanley stood. He would never want to, anyway. Duveen's attitude toward her brothers was the most charming chapter on family relations that George had ever read. Through all of her bantering comradeship there ran a maternal woof that fair clutched at your heart. You could almost hear the rustle of her protecting wings as she spread them over her boys.

George did not picture himself as being behind the wall of her heart as they were. Rather he dreamed of interposing his body between her and the storm, of guarding her with calm but watchful eye much as she held herself as a tender shield before her "men."

It is seldom that modern men are stricken with a devotion such as punctured George's armor. Dante would have understood, and maybe Leander or Abélard. But most of us nowadays fall in love or into a desire that demands the appeasement of contact. George was tormented and inspired by no such demands. He wanted only to serve, to give. Duveen, who later got to know and understand the new George that she had called forth from the chrysalis of the old, found a modicum of satisfaction in the realization that ultimately George attained what was really his goal.

"WELL," demanded Dave, "what are we going to do next?"

"We," the detective reminded him gently, "cannot really do anything together. Unfortunately I have a warrant for your arrest in my pocket. After I have executed it and turned you over to the local authorities for safekeeping, I'll probably go hunting for Don Rosario with a forty-five. It's all I can do if he's over the Mexican border. There wouldn't be time for extradition even if the wheels of government were not tangled up with the revolution. If I may use your telephone, I'll have the chief of police send an escort for you, and—"

He had already taken the telephone from the hook and was about to speak into the mouthpiece when David signed to George to stop him. George did it very simply with a bearlike hug that swept the detective away from the telephone and rendered him speechless from lack of breath—all with one arm.

David caught the telephone-receiver before it dropped to the full length of the cord, and when the hotel operator answered, he asked her to connect him with the Hartman Airways Company over in San Diego.

"What are you planning to do?" Morse demanded.

Duveen had moved over to his side and stood ready with a hastily requisitioned dresser-scarf which could be stuffed into his mouth in case he opened it wide enough to shout for help.

"Wait a minute," requested Dave pleasantly. "I'll tell you as soon as I'm all set to do it."

Then he spoke into the mouthpiece. "Is this Ted Hartman? . . . . Dave King speaking. . . . . Yes, you old son of a sea-beast, you heard me the first time. . . . . Never mind how I got here and all that. Tell you later. The question is now, have you got an air canoe of some sort around there that you can spare, and that you'll rent for a little trip over to Mexico and maybe back. . . . . No, I've got no intention of taking sides in the revolution down there. This is just a little business trip. . . . . Yeah. I know what you mean. . . . . All right, if you haven't got enough confidence in your old rattle-trap to rent it, then sell it to me. It ought to hold together for another five hundred miles anyway. Stick a few safety-pins in her where you think she's most liable to crack open, and I'll be right over."

HE hung up thoughtfully, and regarded Detective Morse with a sigh. "I wish you hadn't butted in here. I don't know what to do with you."

George was fired with a sudden inspiration. "We could bury him in Mexico."

David shook his head. "No, George, that isn't practical. None of us knows the burial service."

Morse said nothing.

"We'll have to take him along," Dave decided. "George, can you keep him quiet while I run the plane?"

George nodded and answered briefly: "Yes."

"You might get sick, though," doubted Dave. "Or have you been up before?"

George shook his head. "No. But I wont be sick."

"Besides," Duveen contributed, "I'll be there to rap him on the head with a hammer or something if he gets funny."

Dave turned to her with placating indulgence.

"I'm sorry, kid, but you're not going. It's no place for a lady."

"But Dave, I aint no lady," she wailed. "I'm just your sister."

"Easy, kid. Can't waste time explaining things much. There's only room for three, anyway. Two would be better, but I can't leave Mr. Morse behind because he knows where I'm going. So you'll have to stay here."

"Orders?"

"Absolutely."

"O. K." She turned away with a boyish show of indifference and looked out the window through which the vista blurred before her eyes.

Dave was preparing to move. He telephoned the garage to send a closed car to the door, took the detective's revolver himself and put it in his right-hand coat pocket.

"Take Mr. Morse's left hand in your right, George, interlacing your fingers and linking arms. I'll do the same on this side, only I'll take a grip that will break his wrist if he speaks to anybody. If he does anyway, I'll shoot and we'll run. Everybody understand?"

"Yeah."

Morse laughed. "I do too. Only I know you wouldn't shoot."

"That's where you've got it on me," Dave returned grimly. "I'm not sure about it. Open the door, Duveen. All set. Let's go. Gangway!"

The three men had to go through the door sidewise, but once in the hall, they organized themselves three abreast and stepped out like three rollicking companions searching for the ghost of a vanished bar.

DUVEEN gazed after them wistfully until they had turned the corner of the corridor and then went back into her room and put in a long-distance call for the Orphanage and then sat down to write a letter while waiting for the connection. She wanted to send a check to Stanley for expense-money.

Just as she finished, the telephone operator called her and delivered her twin on the other end of the wire.

"Hello, Stanley. Listen carefully. This is Duveen. I'm at Hotel del Torquinada. I've seen Dave and George. They've gone to Mexico by airplane. Understand that? Good. They're looking for the man who carried off Hélène and probably murdered Mr. Tremayne. His name is—"

Of course Duveen had no reason for keeping track of what was going on behind her back—nor any reason to suspect that a man had been in the closet ever since before she had entered the room with David.

He had reached a position directly in back of her as she sat at the telephone before she sensed his presence.

Then it was too late. He had an arm around her waist and a hand placed over her mouth so that she could not scream.

It is doubtful if he could have held her even at that, except for the fact that the hand which was over her mouth also held a pad of cotton saturated with chloroform.

Considerably later, a gentleman who said he was Mr. Kirby Smith arrived with a medical specialist entirely surrounded with curled hair.

They were shown to Mrs. Kirby Smith's room, and shortly thereafter an ambulance called for the lady. The arrival of the ambulance and the departure of the lady herself were, with the solicitous assistance of the hotel manager, kept almost entirely secret from the rest of the guests. No need to disturb the patrons of the great health resort with the depressing spectacle of illness or perhaps death.

Anyone casually glimpsing Duveen's face as she was smuggled out of the rear entrance would have been willing to testify that if she were not dead already, she undoubtedly soon would be.

And that was, probably, the general idea of Mr. Kirby Smith, *soi-disant*—but he expected her to live until she had crossed the imaginary line into Mexico, where, with a war going on, it would not be so difficult to account for an unidentified body, even that of a woman.

Chapter Eleven

STANLEY KING was not certain whether Duveen had mumbled the last part of her message or had been cut off in mid-speech by a careless switchboard operator. It was not particularly alarming in either case, but it did

seem rather essential that he hear the name of the gentleman whom she was warning him against.

Therefore he called his own long-distance annihilator and asked what had happened. She did not know, so he requested that he be connected once more. There did not seem to be anyone waiting for him, so he put through a call himself for Miss Duveen King at the Hotel del Torquinada.

Much to his surprise, he was informed that no person of that name was registered, and he finally talked to the clerk on duty, who could give him no further information.

Vaguely perturbed but still confident that Duveen could take care of herself all right, Stanley borrowed ten dollars from Stivers, which crowded his credit in that quarter to the collapsing point, wheedled a tankful of gas out of the filling station on the Boulevard where the King family traded, and turned the nose of his battered flivver toward the south. . . . .

Perhaps thirty minutes after he had left the house, a sleek-haired, rather saturnine-skinned young man called for him. He was expecting, he said, to demonstrate a new model of an expensive make of automobile in which Mr. King had recently expressed an interest.

Fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately, Stivers had a general idea that Mr. Stanley had started for San Diego. He did not realize that he had passed on that information to the young salesman, as the latter was an adroit conversationalist who seemed to have no emotion save that of acute regret that Mr. King should have missed the opportunity of seeing a custom-built model which might never be duplicated.

THE most astonishing thing about the car which stood in front of the Orphanage, a feature the salesman did not dwell upon, was the fact that the passenger enclosure was practically air-tight, or if not entirely so, at least sealed well enough so that an odorless gas cautiously injected into it would not escape quickly.

That was really one of the improvements that he was most anxious to demonstrate to Stanley. It must have been quite important, because he also took the road for San Diego, and as he passed each flivver type of roadster, he carefully scrutinized the features of its driver in his rear-view mirror before picking up the pace and leaving it behind.

If he had known the kind of driver that Stanley was, or if he had been told that the roadster he was looking for had been geared up to do tricks that Henry the First had never dreamed of, the young salesman of destruction might have saved himself a lot of time by not examining any cars until he got as far as the Torrey Pines just north of La Jolla.

It was along in there, and just about when he had arrived at the conclusion that Stanley must have gone in some other direction, that the sallow young man caught up with the little car. He passed Stanley to make sure, then waited for him in La Jolla.

Stanley went through without stopping.

The salesman started after him, though he was apparently no longer a salesman. During the trifling wait in La Jolla he had changed to a smart chauffeur's uniform.

The larger car caught up with Stanley's mount about halfway to San Diego.

The liveried chauffeur held the road in back of Stanley for several miles until he sighted a bend in the highway on a hillside in front of them. Then he forced his car ahead so as to pass Stanley on the curve—contrary to custom and regulation, of course, but perhaps he was not familiar with the laws of the United States.

A car coming from the other direction just at the time when he was abreast of Stanley gave him plenty of excuse to turn into the latter in order to avoid a head-on collision.

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But Stanley was a better driver than that. He turned into the ditch voluntarily, thus avoiding a blow that would have knocked him sidewise clear across it and down the hillside.

The big car went on without touching him, without even pausing to apologize.

Stanley had broken a spring, but that was all. He was even able to get out of the ditch on his own power and to limp into San Diego.

Once in the city, he left the car to be repaired, trusting to luck that a raven would bring him money to pay for the job, and went over to the beach via foot and trolley.

"I was talking on the long-distance telephone from Los Angeles to you or some one here about noon," he told the hotel clerk. "It was with reference to my sister, Miss Duveen King, who, you said, was not registered here."

"Right," said the clerk, "and she isn't."

"Evidently not under her own name," Stanley concurred, "but registered here none the less. She told me that she was stopping here, and whatever else I may accuse her of, she is not a liar. Let's look at the register for yesterday."

"Against the rules," the clerk informed him pleasantly.

"Probably," Stanley agreed. "Then we'll have to lay our troubles before the jolly old manager."

THE assistant manager was on duty at the time. Stanley managed to arouse his interest by referring to the Tremayne murder and implying that his sister's mysterious presence in the hotel might have something to do with the affair.

He started to describe her. "She looks a lot like me, if you will pardon the modesty. I wear more clothes, but that's because of my sex. She can wear mine on occasion and sometimes does. That's where she has the advantage over me, because I would not be caught dead in hers unless I was safely on the other side of a set of footlights."

The assistant manager surveyed him critically.

"I don't believe that I noticed anyone who looked like you. But I have decided to let you go through the registrations for the last few days, anyway. You say she came yesterday?"

"I think so."

Stanley glanced through the cards. "This is her handwriting."

The name was *"Mrs. Kirby Smith."*

"And so is—" Stanley stopped himself. The name *"Mrs. Boyd Tremayne"* was also in Duveen's handwriting, or in an approximation of it. He was quite sure that his sister had written both cards although neither was exactly in her careless script. It seemed just as well, however, not to tell all that he knew.

"I'd like to see her if I may," he requested instead of what he had started to say.

"But Mrs. Kirby Smith left this afternoon," the manager told him. "She was ill and an ambulance came for her."

"An ambulance? What hospital?"

"I don't know, but I'll find out for you."

The assistant manager was wrong. No one seemed to know to what hospital the bogus Mrs. Kirby Smith had been transported. There had been so much secrecy and haste about her departure that some of the ordinary formalities had apparently been overlooked.

"But her husband took complete charge," the clerk informed Stanley. "And he had her private physician with him."

"Getting thicker than mud," mused Stanley. "As my sister has no husband and has never been ill for a single day in her life, the two gentlemen seem to me a bit unaccounted for."

"She might have been married without your knowing it."

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"Possible but not probable."

Stanley was trying to keep his foot in the door of the other's attention while he could think of what he wanted to do next.

"May I see the room she occupied?" he asked finally.

"Yes," conceded the assistant manager, "unless it has been assigned to some other guest, I shall be very glad to place it at your disposal."

Stanley was afraid that he meant, "At our regular rates," but he did not insist upon a definition of terms. The main thing was to keep moving.

Mrs. Kirby Smith's recently vacated room was still empty.

Stanley was left alone in it.

Unfortunately a maid had cleaned it up since it had been vacated, and there was not a sign of the recent tenant. It was as impersonal as a whitewashed cell.

Stanley telephoned to the room which had been assigned to Mrs. Boyd Tremayne, but got no answer there either. He had scarcely expected any—but the fact that the other woman had been registered by his sister in a slightly disguised handwriting puzzled him. Why should Duveen register for Hélène?

NOT in a particularly hopeful frame of mind, Stanley went around to the room he had just called—there might be some one there, even if they did not answer the telephone.

The door was locked, and there was no reaction to a discreet knocking—even in a code that was intelligible only to a member of the Crew.

Stanley noted the relative position of the room with reference to the nearest exit to the balcony which runs all the way around the back part of the hotel on all floors, and went outside. One of the balcony windows of the Tremayne room was open. The curtains blew gently in.

Stanley looked hastily up and down the balcony. There was no one in sight. He stepped in, and turned on the lights.

On the bed lay a man wound round and round with light rope, clothes-line probably, and with a gagging handkerchief stuffed into his mouth.

"All ready to be barbecued," Stanley murmured as he surveyed his find.

The man was conscious, all right. His eyes were wide open—dark, beady ones, they were; and he looked at Stanley questioningly. What he wanted to know was obviously whether he was to expect succor or further abuse from this stranger who had entered via the irregular route of the window.

Nor did Stanley know whether they were foes or friends, either, although the presumption was in favor of the latter, especially since the dark-skinned man was trussed up so skillfully.

"Will you promise not to yell if I take the gag out of your mouth?" Stanley asked cautiously.

The man nodded his head vigorously.

Stanley loosened the gag and removed it, but stood ready to shove it back if the patient broke his word.

There seemed little chance that he would. The sallow young man could scarcely move his jaws at all, and when he tried to speak, the best that he could do was to whisper, "Water!"

Stanley took a chance and got him some, holding his head up so that he could drink without choking.

"Thanks," said the young man thickly. His tongue was apparently still much too large and probably fuzzy like a caterpillar's pajamas. "Will you untie me, please?" he then requested.

"Probably," Stanley conceded, "in a minute or so. Who are you and what are you doing here?"

The young man considered for a moment. Perhaps he was only oiling his tongue. "I

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have decided to tell you the truth. But first of all, you are Mr. Stanley King, you are not?"

"Yes," Stanley admitted, "but how do you know?"

"Your sister have told me that you much resemble one to each other."

Stanley's mind did not much concern itself with the reply to his question. Instead it had tripped over the plural verb "have told" and the peculiar phrase "resemble one to each other." The man was not an American. The accent was quite good, but the thought must have originated in another language from which it had been translated into English.

"You are acquainted with Amelia, then?" questioned Stanley.

"Oh, yes, quite extremely."

"For a tall red-head, she's quite a beauty, don't you think?"

"Ravishing and adorable."

Stanley looked at him thoughtfully. "Except for a few minor discrepancies, you have described Amelia exactly. What has become of her?"

"She has been despirited away."

"Um. So I thought. But where to?"

"That I do not know the exact spot, but I think—"

"You think you can take me there?"

The man hesitated.

"Yes," he agreed.

Stanley knew there was something wrong about this fortuitous discovery of a man who could lead him to his sister. He had found him bound and gagged—that is true; but on the other hand the prisoner, if he was that, did not know what Duveen looked like, did not even know her name.

Still, he was the only link that Stanley had with her, and she had obviously at the time she telephoned wanted him to know where she was. So he thoughtfully untied the ropes that bound the other man into the semblance of a mummy.

Chapter Twelve

THE airplane which Ted Hartman sold him was an ancient biplane of a model with which David had once been familiar, but not recently. Young Mr. Hartman shrugged his shoulders. "You said you only wanted to use it for a short flight. Anyway, it's all I've got that I can spare. She's really sturdier than she looks, and to prove my confidence in her, I'll allow you to pay for her next week."

Dave grinned appreciatively. "What could be more generous than that?"

But he took the ship anyway and signaled George, who stood at a little distance, to bring Morse over.

The detective got into the rear seat with George—not a comfortable compartment for two men of their size; and David took the controls.

The plane hit the air a little clumsily, like a camel getting up knees first; but once off the ground, it steadied down all right and seemed to be rather speedier than ordinary. Neither George nor the detective knew that David had to drive fast to keep the ancient contraption from nosing down to the ground.

He took them high, too, partly for the sake of safety in case the motor stalled, and also in order to pass the border unobtrusively. Unless there were an air patrol sitting on their tail somewhere, the authorities of both governments would have no check on their movements. It seemed advisable not to advertise that three husky Americans had emigrated to the southern sister republic with no specific commercial or tourist mission.

David made an intentional landing just across the border, but back of Tia Juana.

"I'm going into town to make a few inquiries," Dave explained. "You two will have to stay here until I get back."

"To guard the plane?" queried Morse.

"Yes, to guard everything," Dave replied significantly.

"I wont make any trouble," the detective volunteered.

"Absolutely right," corroborated George.

"O. K." Dave was already on his way. "Back as soon as possible."

"I wonder," mused the detective, "if you really could stop me if I wanted to get away or if I had any idea of wrecking the plane."

"I'd like to see you try it," returned George.

"It would serve to pass the time away."

"Wait until King is out of sight," suggested George. "No use giving him any extra worry."

"Maybe we'd better wait until he's out of hearing, too," amended the big detective slyly. "It would probably bother him to hear the groans and cries for help."

George snorted. "Aint going to be any noise, practically. I do it all with one movement and leave 'em speechless."

"M-m-m," Morse said mostly to himself. "This boy is sure big business in his own office. I guess I ought to be glad to be related to him."

"Relation or no relation," George told him, "you're still a cop."

"And I suppose you eat cops?"

"Regularly. Prefer 'em to oatmeal for breakfast."

"Hm." Morse took off his coat. "Looks like it's going to be warm today."

"Hot, probably," George concurred, removing his own. "You'd better take off your vest, too."

"What for?"

"I was thinking of your watch-crystal," George explained. "It might get cracked."

"Oh, that's all right. I've never been hit that hard by anything yet."

"But this looks like it might be different. That plane is a little crowded with three in it, anyway."

David really was out of sight and even earshot, or he might have returned to proclaim an armistice.

Instead he proceeded into town, and passing up the race-track, which was vomiting forth its afternoon crowd, he went over to the casino bar, where the visiting customers were lining up in the hour or so before the border closed and getting a few quick ones to take back with them to the land of the spree and the home of the crave.

The crowd of tourists was not quite so large as it was in other seasons, but aside from the presence of a few more uniforms than usual, there were no particular signs that a revolution was going on. David was rather surprised that the rebels had made no attempt to capture the little gambling town. Perhaps they were waiting for the Coffroth Handicap, when there would be more money in the hands of the banks.

IT was fifteen minutes or so before Dave found the person he was looking for. He was a thin, nervous, middle-aged man who dressed much too nattily for his graying hair. But all of his kind do that.

He recognized Dave as a one-time friend and customer. "Sorry I didn't see you earlier in the day, Governor. I had a couple of hot ones in the fourth and fifth this afternoon. I even played 'em myself." He displayed a bulging bank-roll. "What'll you have?"

"I asked you first," Dave told him.

The tout did not argue about it. He drank beer. "Steadies the nerves. Funny," he mused, "working down here where I can get all the hard stuff I want, still I never order it."

Dave did not have time to go into the psychology of prohibition.

"Do you know anything about a horse called Rio Rose?" he asked directly.

The other grinned. "Sure, that's the one I was saving for you this afternoon. But

it's too late now. After coming in last on Sunday she romps away with sixteen to one on the mutuels today, and nobody on her but me and a couple of wise *caballeros*—friends of her owner, I guess. It was her last race this season and even if she was entered again everybody would be hanging onto her hocks now and you'd only get about even money."

To be sure, David had not asked about Rio Rose to get data about her starting price; but the tout's flood of information gave him an opportunity to ask a few pertinent questions without appearing unduly inquisitive.

"Who's her owner?"

"She's entered by the Rose River Syndicate, but I guess you know who that is—everybody south of the line does, anyway. He's the big chile and frijole man in Baja California. Got a finger in everything—they even say his middle name is Agua Caliente, and of course you know what that means."

David guessed that it meant money and political pull practically without limit. Even discounting the tout's appraisal fifty per cent, this Rosario was a person of tremendous power, and the nearer you approached the center of his web the more ominous he seemed.

"You've seen him?" David asked.

"The Big Boy himself?" The man laughed. "Yes and no. I've seen several guys that were pointed out to me as the principal clacker, but never the same one twice. He carries his own smoke-screen. But last Sunday I think I had my glasses on him for a minute. I'll tell you why. The swellest looking woman I ever saw was with a kind of a hard-boiled foreigner bimbo. Everybody was getting an eyeful of her between races. Well, this guy we're talking about,—not mentioning any names because it aint so healthy around here,—has a reputation for being a picker. He gets 'em young and beautiful and leaves 'em in six months on the doorstep of the Old Ladies' Home."

THIS information Dave absorbed and sorted as it was dealt out to him. It seemed very likely that the race-track man really had seen Hélène. She had probably been there Sunday—the chart upon which she had written her message to him implied that. And his description of the woman, while not accurately detailed, covered exactly the impression she made on most men. David had often wished that she was not so conspicuously beautiful. He would have preferred almost that she should have had a charm that was not discernible to any but the acutely observing eye.

"Did you notice anything else?"

"Not then. The race started and everybody turned toward the track, me included."

"But did you look back after the race?"

"Yeah. Not that what had happened was so unusual. Many a dame before her has fainted from the excitement of losing everything what she keeps in her hosiery except her leg. What I saw was that the big guy has picked her up and is carrying her outside, followed by some of his yes-men, which probably are really sort of a bodyguard. I was leaving the grounds myself and I admit I edged in a little to get a better look at the girl. But the crowd closes in about them and I couldn't see anything. I was near enough, though, to hear that the party is all upset because one of the men has pulled a double cross of some kind and ducked. Rosario, if that's who it was, gives orders to a couple of his men to chase after the squealer and then gets in the car himself with the dame and beats it."

The continuation of the narrative practically confirmed in David's mind the fact that the woman in the case was Hélène. The missing member of the party—that must have been the young Mexican to whom she had given the note. He could not quite figure out why Hélène had fainted. Perhaps Rosario

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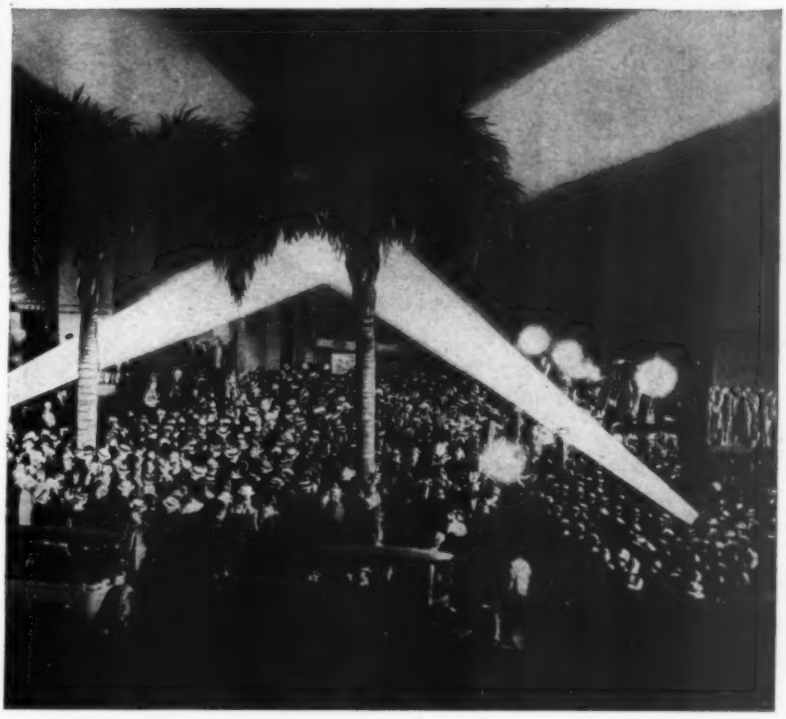

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had hurt her when he had discovered her attempt to summon help. David scowled and added that to the score which he expected to settle in full.

"Which way did the car go?" he asked.

"Away from town," the tout replied. "The road might go either to Caliente or to the Gulf. My guess is that he probably hunted the best hide-away he's got, and that would be down the Gulf somewhere. With a woman like that he wouldn't need a lot of other people around to amuse him. I'm telling you, she's the female ace of all the world. You never saw anything so wonderful."

"Down the Gulf," David repeated. "If this man is the one you think he is, he'd have his headquarters somewhere there in that forgotten hell, I suppose."

"Maybe it aint so hellish the way he's got it fixed up. He don't look like he suffered an awful lot of hardship."

"Whereabouts down there?" asked Dave.

The other shrugged his shoulders. "I should know about *that!* I guess it's quite a ways. He's got the fastest cruising launch on the West Coast,—thirty-five miles is just walking for her, I understand,—and distance don't cut any ice. He could go from here to La Paz between lunch and dinner."

David had a lot of faith in the keenness of the tout's observation. His character may not have been above reproach but his eyesight and his shrewdness were better than ordinary. And there was no reason, as far as David knew, why the race-track hanger-on should lie to him. Once they had been friends in a curious way—it was in a matter concerning Stanley, who had gotten involved with the authorities, both government and racing association, during the meet the previous year. The tout had helped David get him out and David had been generous in his appreciation.

Therefore David decided that he had accumulated about all the information he could reasonably expect, and decided to move up another step on his quarry.

He bought another drink, and he and the tout went out together. As they came to the door a gigantic automobile, not ornate, though,—a low-hung, stripped-looking beast with a covered cabriolet body that seemed more like a transomed cockpit,—went past and disappeared down the street.

"There she is," said the tout.

"What?"

"The big fellow's heap—leastwise, that's the one he took the dame away in the other day."

And it was the one in which Mr. Kirby Smith, whoever he was, had just crossed the border with Mrs. Kirby Smith, who was still quite ill and therefore unable to be interviewed by the Customs officers of the two countries.

Mrs. Kirby Smith was just recovering consciousness as the automobile passed the casino. She did not see David, but she was calling to him anyway, with the first controlled use of her faculties.

"Hello below," she had cried faintly. "Skipper, ahoy! Where are you?"

And Mr. Kirby Smith had bent over her and shook her a little. "Quiet, you, until we get out of town. Then you can yell if you want to."

DAVE hurried back to the airplane, where George and Morse were sitting much as he had left them. The only noticeable change was that there was a triangular tear in the detective's pants over the right knee, and George had a swollen upper lip.

"Hop aboard the crate," Dave ordered. "We're going through."

George made contact for him as he had seen the mechanics do at the flying-field, and scrambled into the rear pit with Morse as the motor settled into the wire harness and lifted the protesting hulk off from the ground.

They went high again and circled around a good deal, looking for something—neither George nor the detective knew exactly what, until finally Dave found it and pointed it out.

They were over the placid northern fingertip of the Gulf of California, and the plane swooped low enough to make preliminary identification certain.

What looked like a straight white ostrich feather lay across the surface of the water. A little lower down, and the passengers could see that it was a wake of ruffled water being stirred up by a swift little mahogany-and-white motor-boat ripping madly through the water.

Apparently satisfied that he had found what he wanted, Dave soared again and wandered off at an angle inland over Sonora.

But he came back again soon to see if that feather was still there and then, high enough to be out of sight, he followed the tiny white thread for a couple of hours.

MEANWHILE, down below on the deck of the motor-boat, Mrs. Kirby Smith was allowed to stretch her cramped legs and arms.

The steersman was a Chinaman.

"Where are we, John?" Duveen asked.

The sailor indicated that he did not speak English. Duveen suspected that he was lying but she turned to the only other man in evidence, a sublimated deck-hand and steward, dressed in "whites" that intensified the swarthiness of his complexion.

"Whose yacht is this?" she asked.

"It is the Señora's," he replied, and from the grin which accompanied the answer, she knew that he was repeating a formula that he had been taught in advance.

If she should ask where they were going, the polite rejoinder would be, "Wherever the Señora wishes,"—so she did not put that question.

Instead she tried to determine for herself where she was. The sea was calmer than the ocean usually is and the water seemed a little clearer—less churned up, considering that they were in sight of shore, where the sand and sea-weed roiled by the tide and the breakers ordinarily make the waves opaque and murky instead of glass green as they are farther out.

The land itself—on the starboard side—was bleak and unpromising. The hills rose abruptly from a hot, uncomfortable shore. It was now late afternoon and the faces of the mountains in the background held no cool shadows. You could see wavering heat rising from everything.

It was cool enough on the tiny yacht, but that was partly because of the breeze they were making themselves. To Duveen it scarcely seemed possible that anything could possibly be propelled through or over the water at such a terrific and effortless speed.

The steward brought her some sandwiches and a glass of milk.

Another sailor—he looked like an Indian—relieved the Chinaman at the wheel.

Some islands loomed up ahead.

Darkness was coming on as the boat slipped through a channel between them and then cut across to the right and into a swampy sort of a sound or bayou that was presumably an indentation in the mainland or at least in a larger island.

Overhead, the plane flying lower in the dusk noticed the destination of the boat and then swept away to look for a place to land.

It was too late to search very far, and what looked like a fairly level sand valley was really rather messed up with sizable rocks.

The plane turned over and folded up her ancient wings in a gesture of finality.

Unfortunately, David was underneath the engine.

(The next dramatic installment of this engrossing mystery-story appears in our forthcoming January issue.)

HEART OF THE NORTH

(Continued from page 37)

Yard by cautious yard the two men slipped back into the rushes till they were a safe distance from the lake.

Then they began the long, hard job of circling around the bandits.

Mosquitoes rose about them in clouds as they made their way through the flags. Vicious *brûlés* and big yellow-banded caribou-flies hit them like the slap of a hornet. The water was ankle-deep everywhere; the soil under it was a boggy muck that quivered and gurgled under their tread. Again and again they came to little runs and creeks. Some they stepped over or waded; at others Alan handed the weapons to Bill, swam across, and caught the guns as they were tossed to him.

Wet, muddy, tortured by the insect pests, they pushed steadily on, mindful of coming twilight.

Their worst fear was the danger of scaring up waterfowl. Other eyes besides theirs might interpret that sign. Whenever a pair of geese or cloud of teal flew overhead, they crouched down and "froze" till the birds were past. They had to make a long, patient detour around an acre of niggerhead where a colony of black tern, hundreds and hundreds of them, were sitting on their rookery tussocks, gabbling in neighborly fashion but ready to explode like a bag of feathers in wild squawking alarm.

In the flags around them they heard the splash of muskrats and the occasional slap of a beaver's tail. Rails and yellowlegs and skulkers slipped quietly out of their path and hid in the dense reeds. Against the blood-red light of the western sky the undulating flight of wavies, gray and white, showed up in striking silhouette. With the sinking of the sun, a weird medley of noises began to arise—the gibbering of red-throated loons, the boom of "thunder-pumps," the swelling chorus of "knee-deep" frogs and "better-go-rounds," the honking and trumpeting of numberless geese and ducks and cranes.

It took an hour and a half to make the wide careful circle and start coming in toward the bandits from the north. The sun was cut in two by the western horizon; the chill of twilight was in the air; those six men would shortly be on the move. But Alan's hopes had risen again; it seemed that he indeed "had taken his luck along." The bandits did not know they were being stalked. In half an hour more, if luck held, he and Bill would be in position to open on them all unawares.

DROPPING at last to hands and knees, the two of them crawled along through muck and water, keeping only their guns dry. They came up within a hundred yards of their quarry.

Ahead of them lay a muskrat-pond where their shelter, the tall flags, gave out. The pond was covered with water a couple of feet deep. Green reeds stuck a foot above the surface, and a dozen big muskrat-houses were scattered here and there in it. Alan thought that the rat which Larry had noticed must have been making for this very colony. On the other side of the pond, straight in the direction where Larry was waiting, was half an acre of dry ground covered with tall brown reeds. There was the hiding-place of the bandits; there they had concealed themselves, to wait till deep twilight.

As he parted the reeds in front of his face to study this dry plot, Alan saw the tops of a clump over there sway suspiciously. A moment later he glimpsed the dim outline of a man standing up, stretching himself, sitting down again.

In actual sight now, those men who had killed Jimmy Montgomery! Only a pistol-shot away. But to take them—Alan cursed savagely at the memory of Haskell's ignorant orders, at the thought of Pedneault and those two men far distant. As he remembered what Haskell said about the Law being behind them, his lips curled in scorn at the cant expression. "The Law that's supposed to be back of us—I wonder where in hell it is now! What does it mean to Bill and me now?" Here in this watery wilderness in the creeping twilight, he and Bill were going up against six men who had stood off fifty and who had murder charges hanging over their heads. And if they broke away, Larry single-handed would have to stand the whole brunt of stopping them.

AT his gesture, Bill slid cautiously up beside him. Alan twisted his head and stared a moment at his partner; and in spite of their situation, a smile flickered over his face. Never very regimental even when slicked up for inspection, Bill was an incredible sight now, with his tousled red hair a shaggy mop, his clothes all plastered with mud, his grimy face bristling with a three-days' beard. A caribou-fly had bitten him just above the ear, and a tiny streak of crimson was trickling down to his bulldog jaw.

In whispers Alan said to him: "Bill, we've got to get closer. We've got to get across this pond. These muskrat-houses out there are good luck for us. By keeping down in the water, with these little reeds to help hide us, we can sneak from one house to the next. The last one isn't a dozen yards from these men. If we make it we'll have point-blank range and the best kind of cover to shoot from."

Taking off hats and jackets, they wriggled carefully out of the tall flags, eased into the water and squirmed toward the first muskrat-house, which stood up four feet above the surface and entirely hid their approach. Behind it they stopped a moment, chose their next one, and sank back into the water. Holding their rifles and belt-guns above the surface, they wriggled toward the second house, keeping themselves immersed to the chin.

As they crouched down behind the third little dome of mud and reeds, a towering red-bearded man parted the flags they were staring at, bent and scooped up a hatful of water, took a swallow, threw the rest down with an oath at its vile taste; and then, shaking the water out of his hat, he disappeared again.

Alan's last secret doubt about these bandits being utter strangers in the country was dispelled now. He had had a clear view of this huge red-bearded leader; he could say positively, as Ashmun and all the passengers had sworn, that he had never laid eyes on the man before.

To Bill he whispered: "When we reach that last house, I'll splash or do something to draw their attention. They'll come out to the flags' edge again to see what it is. Don't shoot when just one man shows up. We'll wait till we have three of them in plain sight. If we get three of them at the first crack, we'll be fighting the other three on even terms. Let's be moving now. Dusk is coming along."

They started for the fourth muskrat-house. Halfway there, disaster overwhelmed them, sudden and stunning. . . . .

It came from the air, in the shape of a pair of red-throated loons. Flapping heavily out of the west, the birds dropped with a loud splash not ten feet away from the two men. Both Alan and Bill "froze" again, holding

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their breath, praying that the loons would swim leisurely away.

At the splash Alan heard a muffled oath over in the flags; then a rustling movement, as though the bandits had nervously jumped for their guns; then silence. Then a voice from among the reeds:

"Nothin'. Just a pair of divers plumped down."

The alarm would have blown over if the loons had swum off. But the birds, crop-heavy and indolent, stayed where they were, showing no intention of moving away. As the female started preening herself, the male turned its eye suspiciously at the two strange objects sticking above the water.

What started it, Alan never knew. Bill did not move; he himself did not bat an eyelash. But in that jumpy taut silence the male suddenly threw open its beak and sent up a raucous maniacal shriek, as though some animal had seized it by the neck.

Instantly its mate joined in. The jarring, ear-splitting discord set muskrats diving off their houses and flushed every waterfowl in the lake a hundred yards distant. With a last frantic peal the loons taxied over the water, finally managed to take wing, and flapped heavily away.

But the damage had been done beyond retrieve. All that hour and a half of careful stalking, all the great caution and pains, had been set at naught by the crazy shriek of a crazy loon.

The air was suddenly full of the swish and whirr of wings. Over in the murky twilight of the flags there was a commotion, sharp orders, the click of rifle-bolts. At the edge of the flags a gun *cra-aa-cked*, a rope of flame reached out, a bullet ricocheted off the water.

It was a shrewd maneuver from the bandits, a tentative shot to draw the fire of their stalkers and discover where they were. Alan was quick-witted enough to see their motive and to lie low; but Bill jerked his rifle against his cheek and shot point-blank at the spurt of fire.

A cry of pain went up. His bullet had scored. But the shot gave away their hiding.

With all hopes gone now of getting the drop, Alan scrambled behind cover of a muskrat-house, fairly dragging Bill after him.

HALF a dozen rifles exploded in the flags. Their bullets splatted into the mud, plunked into the water, sizzled hotly across the pond. Alan thrust his gun over the top of the house and emptied it at the flashes. A bullet hit his weapon, smashed the mechanism, numbed his hand, and drove jagged fiery bits of steel into his fingers.

Bill started to rise above the tiny mound, to get in a better shot. Sharply Alan jerked him back.

"You damned fool! Keep down! Want to get killed? We can't see them, but against this water they can see us plain!"

For several minutes the bullets of the bandits beat a thudding tattoo against the mud mound. As best they could, Alan and Bill lifted their belt-guns over the top of their shelter, and fired back. They heard no more yelps of pain. They were shooting wildly, aimlessly. Realizing this, believing the bandits had crept into the run and were sheltered by its banks, Alan stopped shooting, and checked Bill.

Yonder in the reeds the fire died away raggedly. A silence fell. A minute lengthened into two, three, four. Alan heard, or thought he heard, a faint rustling, a faint gurgling of water. He listened intently, but did not hear it again.

With his plans all shattered, and with the twilight steadily deepening, he was torn with desperation. If he and Bill moved, it was sheer suicide; if they crouched where they were, the bandits would certainly slip away from them in the coming dark. They might already be backing off, down the muskrat run, toward the lake. . . . .

As he fought to think of a plan that would break this deadlock, he heard a long whistle, a clear shrill whistle from Larry's direction. It was Larry signaling.

He sprang up. "Bill! They're breaking for the lake. Larry's alone. We've got to help Larry!"

They splashed out of the pond and into the flags, in a frantic effort to reach the lake edge.

The marsh reeds clutched at them, tripped them, wrapped around their legs. Savagely they tore their way on through, to get into the clear in time and help Larry.

As he swung his clubbed rifle, smashing a pathway in front of him, Alan heard a lone gun *cr-aa-ck* over on the lake, and heard the snarl of half a dozen repeating weapons answering it like an echo. They overwhelmed it; the lone gun did not speak again.

It seemed hours to Alan that he fought and tore through the dense flags, to reach the open and help a comrade who was standing up against six rifles. As he burst out to the lake edge, he had a glimpse of the police canoe drifting helplessly out in the middle; and across at the far side, he saw two long blurred objects just entering the deep-water channel.

Not yet realizing what had happened to Larry, he whipped out his belt-gun and emptied it at those two craft. In the twilight, at that long range, it was a futile gesture of heart-sickened despair. The canoes did not even shoot back at him, but skirled on and vanished in the purple dusk.

There was a moment when Alan could realize only that his patrol had failed, that pursuit was utterly hopeless. In the next moment he heard a sound, like a groaning voice calling his name. It drew his eyes to the drifting police craft. What was it doing out there? Like a flash, he realized what Larry had done. When the bandits started across the lake to escape, Larry must have seen he could never stop them in the semi-darkness except at point-blank range. In the police canoe Larry must have come fearlessly out at them, alone. Their first deadly volley had got him.

Bill came bursting through to the clear. Alan whirled on him:

"Bill! They got Larry. He's wounded hard hit. . . . . Here!" He tossed Bill his belt-gun and broken rifle; and running out into breast-deep water, he struck out powerfully for the drifting canoe.

By a provident mercy he reached it in time. With half a dozen holes spouting water into it, the craft was filling, tilting, about to overturn.

Larry lay at the bottom of it, writhing in pain.

To clamber in would have swamped the water-logged canoe instantly. By heroic struggles, swimming, pushing a dead-weight ahead of him, Alan got the craft into shoal water, put his hand under its keel then, and kept it afloat.

He dragged it to the bank just as Bill came splashing around the lake edge to join him.

"Alan! What happened—where'd they go?"

"They got away. They're gone—*gone*. Forget it. Help me, Bill—with Larry!"

Together they bent over their bleeding, stricken comrade, and together they lifted him tenderly ashore.

Chapter Eight

BY the light of an electric torch Alan cut away Larry's clothing and examined his wounds. Larry had been shot twice, and both wounds were fearsome. One bullet, a ricocheting slug, had struck him squarely in the knee, cruelly shattering the bones. The second had pierced his chest high up, just beneath the shoulder, and had passed entirely through his body.

As they bent over their stricken comrade, so limp and ghastly pale, and thought of him sharing the toil and danger of that day and coming out lone-handed against those six murderers, a great pity swept Alan and Bill and unnerved them, hardened though they were to grim realities. There were tears in Bill's eyes, and his voice was a hoarse broken whisper:

"Larry—poor Larry—shot down like this! Alan, he's—he's dying—"

Unable to endure the sight, he turned away; and hardly knowing what he did, he dragged the canoe ashore and mechanically started to patch it.

Alan worked desperately with tourniquet and tiny medicine-kit till he had stanched the bleeding.

Before he finished, Larry was rousing faintly from the bullet-shock.

Half an hour later, when the canoe was ready, they turned their faces toward home, —defeated, and in sorrow and anguish over Larry

Alan picked him up in his arms, gently and tenderly, trying to keep that fatal bleeding from starting afresh. With Bill following him, staggering under the weight of canoe and guns and pack, he headed back toward the Alooska branch.

For an hour they stumbled along muskrat runways, and plowed through bog and mire, and groped through the tall impeding flags. It was an hour of darkness, of heroic blind struggle. But they reached the Alooska branch at last and set the canoe to water; and making Larry a soft bed of flags, they began their sorrowful journey.

WITH no sleep in more than fifty hours, with all that long, hard chase behind them, they were on the verge of exhaustion, and could make no time. Their hands were raw with blisters; their faces were bleeding from insect bites. They were muddied, wet, gaunt with hunger, heartsick from the disgraceful failure of their patrol. But they refused to stop or rest; Larry had to be taken home quickly; the hours were a matter of life or death to Larry. With dogged courage they drove themselves on.

There was no sun that morning. A dismal pall of clouds driving out of the northwest drenched them again and again with icy showers. The hours dragged endlessly. A straight reach of a few hundred yards seemed like weary leagues.

With his spirits at so low an ebb, the picture of that fur pack in Dave MacMillan's storage-shed rose before Alan's eyes and he saw the inevitable consequences to flow from that discovery. In his exhaustion, with the buoyancy of hope drained out of him, he no longer could feel that he was going to get Joyce's father off lightly. He must take Dave in to Endurance and enter charges; and now, with these bandits escaped, Dave would bear the whole brunt of the law's retribution.

He felt that all the rest of his life he would be haunted by the memory of Joyce's pale face, frightened and anguished, in the cold dawn of yesterday.

In this whole miserable business—Jimmy Montgomery dead, Larry in the shadow of death, that tragedy hovering over innocent Joyce MacMillan, the bandits escaped and the patrol disgraced—in all this evil-starred affair, only one thought held any comfort for Alan. It was a vengeful thought, born of a savage and vengeful mood. He held a sword now over Inspector Haskell. Haskell had ordered this patrol to be split. Out of

his ignorance and jealous anger, he had issued that crazy order, and it had wrecked the patrol.

Alan swore: "I'll not pussyfoot with him now. He'll walk the chalk-line; he'll listen to what I've got to say, or I'll bring on an investigation and smoke him out. Men like Bill and Larry and Frank aren't going to pay the price of his incompetence and personal grudges."

By mid-afternoon of that interminable day they came to the first straggling trees at the Thal-Azzah edge. At deep twilight they reached the Alooska Forks and the anchored launch.

Pedneault had just returned from his useless trip up the south branch. In a few words he understood all that had happened. With one glance at his spent and staggering partners, he took their heavy burden from their shoulders.

Alan roused himself from his numbed exhaustion long enough to do one last merciful thing. In the medicine-chest of the launch he found a hypodermic needle and drugs for Larry—to still that agonizing pain, to keep that weak heart beating.

IN his cabin, Inspector Haskell sat behind his desk, waiting for Alan Baker to come in and report. He was thinking—thinking hard; and for all his self-control his nerves were jumpy. His fingers twitched as he tried to light a monogrammed cigarette, and he glanced nervously at the doorway through which his Nemesis would presently come striding.

Over in a corner Whipple sat at the table, pretending to write but in reality waiting there, as Haskell had bade him. Outside, it was twilight, gloomy and chill; a pall of clouds shut out the midnight sun-glow, and a grayish mist was creeping up the terrace from the Mackenzie.

Something cold had gripped Haskell half an hour ago when he saw the patrol returning without the six bandits and with Constable Younge desperately wounded. He knew the details of that patrol already; Whipple had come up and privately told him —how the bandits had headed for the Thal-Azzah, as Baker had warned; how Baker had run those six to earth and cornered them; how Pedneault and the other two constables had been a hundred and forty miles away during that crucial hour.

As he knew, this crime was the most spectacular in years along the Three Rivers. The defeat administered to the police was the most stinging in a decade. This incident would have reverberations at headquarters. Superintendent Williamson would investigate. The very first question of that veteran old officer would be:

"Why in hell did you order Baker to divide that patrol? Splitting up his detail that way—didn't you realize that neither party would be able to handle those criminals?"

Not deluding himself, Haskell knew he was caught. He knew he had made a capital mistake in a Force where a man's first mistake is usually his last. In these thirty minutes all his prospects—of promotion in service, of swinging Elizabeth Spaulding to him, of smashing Alan Baker—had come tumbling down like a house of cards, and he was thoroughly frightened.

It would spell *finis* to his career if the facts of that patrol became known.

If Williamson ever found out he had ordered that patrol split, he was sunk. Therefore—Williamson must not find out.

STILL in his muddied and torn uniform, Alan came down the slope toward Haskell's cabin, intending to bludgeon some hard and fast terms out of the guilty Inspector or shoot a complaint over his head to Superintendent Williamson. If Haskell did not give in to his demands, he meant to send a half-breed runner to the Royal Signal Corps station at Resolution and flash a message to the division commander that would start an avalanche.

Over at Mrs. Drummond's house where Joyce had gone, candles were gleaming in the windows. Across at Father Claverly's tiny hospital, Larry Younge lay fighting for his life. Up the slope at barracks Dave MacMillan was locked in the police jail, charged with being accomplice to robbery and murder.

Alan's ears still rang with the savage words with which Joyce's father had lashed him. And he was thinking chiefly of Dave, as he went down the slope. Twelve hours ago, when he stepped ashore at the trading-post and met the trader, he had been astonished at the change in Dave. The man had got a new grip on himself; he had straightened up; Joyce had visibly reclaimed him. With his own eyes Alan had seen Dave's stupefied bewilderment when confronted with that pack of furs, and his savage fighting anger when he was arrested. That reaction was the unmistakable fiery anger of a man entirely innocent—and savage because of his innocence.

Furthermore Joyce had reported secretly: "Alan, I talked with him, as you asked me to. *He isn't guilty.* He'd never heard a whisper about these bandits, till I told him. He couldn't have deceived *me!*"

That same impression had been Alan's—"He couldn't have deceived me." His beliefs were based upon intangible things, but to him they outweighed all the weight of material evidence stacked against the trader. There was something behind that pack of furs which hadn't come to light yet and which would explain those damning circumstances.

He meant to put up a fight for Dave; but the only way under heaven of clearing Dave, was to capture the guilty men. They were safe now in the Thal-Azzah; they could never be ferreted out of that amphibious wilderness. They would certainly stay there till the heavy spring rains were over and the hunt died down. Besides, the flies in that country made traveling next to impossible. But in three weeks or a month, the rains would stop and the flies would go.

Which way would they try to escape? They knew better than to come back west and show up along the Mackenzie. They wouldn't go north to the Arctic coast; they'd have no ship to get away on; the Mounted had patrols there. They wouldn't go south through Chippewyan territory; the Indians would give them away, and police posts were sprinkled plentifully through the Great Slave and Athabasca country.

They'd go *east* when they left the Thal-Azzah. They'd go across the Great Barrens to Hudson's Bay and try to pick up passage on a fishing smack, or go east and south toward the Pas in Manitoba. There was only one route leading east out of the Thal-Azzah, and they would have to take it. It was an old Tinneh trade-route—the Inconnu River.

Alan had determined to lead a patrol to the Inconnu.

AS he strode into the cabin he saw Haskell waiting for him, coolly smoking a cigarette. It seemed to Alan that the man actually did not realize that his ignorant stubborn orders had wrecked the patrol and that the whole blame and shame of it lay at his door.

When he finished his report, Haskell made no comment. Wondering at his cool, casual air, Alan was silent a few moments. He could not understand the man's nonchalance; this was war between them; each knew it; and yet Haskell showed no fear, no concern, no conciliatory spirit whatsoever.

Keeping back his heavy weapon, Alan took up his defense of Joyce's father:

"About Dave MacMillan: My opinion is, he's entirely innocent. There's no call to

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send him outside to Edmonton. A traveling court is coming down to Three Rivers in August, and his case can wait for that. He can be kept here, or released on bail. Drummond will put up bail; I'll be personally responsible for him. There's another reason: he's got some good friends among the Dog-ribs; if he's released he'll get busy and stir them up to help hunt those bandits—"

Haskell interposed: "There's no bail for a man charged with murder."

"This is an accessory charge. There is a bail for that."

"What was he doing last week? Where was he? Can he put up any alibi?"

"He was out southeast in the Candle-Ice Lake country, trying to locate Little Otter's band. He'd fed them all winter; they owed him their spring peltry. But they'd sneaked away and taken their peltry in to the L. and H. He saw no one; he has no alibi."

"Pretty flimsy—a week without seeing a single person."

"A week? You can travel a *month* in that country without seeing anybody!"

"That trader wont be released," Haskell said flatly. "I'll decide whether to keep him here or send him outside to Edmonton."

Alan saw the Inspector's motive. In a crime of this size Haskell had to make at least some showing. If no one was caught, no one punished, Headquarters would be flashing some hot radiograms at him. But if he could report that he had captured the ringleader, Headquarters would give him time; other detachments would take up the hunt; he would save his skin.

Dismissing Dave MacMillan's plight with a curt gesture, Haskell demanded: "What made you leave Constable Burgoon there at the trading-post, short-handed as we are?"

"To watch after the furs and the trade-goods."

"That's MacMillan's look-out. I'll instruct Pedneault to get Burgoon tomorrow."

"Miss Joyce expects to return there. She has good reasons. What protection do you intend to give her?"

"If she insists on returning, I don't feel any responsibility. This isn't an orphanage; it's a Mounted Police post."

Alan entered that remark in his red ledger against the Inspector. Haskell's callous attitude toward a defenseless grief-stricken girl seemed to him an index to the man's real manhood. He himself could not look after Joyce's safety; within forty-eight hours he would be leaving Fort Endurance on the Inconnu patrol, and that might keep him away two months.

There was a note of personal animus in Haskell's mention of Joyce, and Alan knew the source of it. Hunting caribou up the Alooska last fall, Haskell had stopped at the trading-post over night. Because Joyce was living there in that sub-Arctic isolation, he made the sorry mistake of thinking she was an entirely innocent young creature easily dazzled by his rank and gold braid and city polish. . . . .

Alan often had thought: "If I know anything about Joyce, she *slapped* that delusion out of him!"

STILL keeping cool, he broached the matter of that patrol to the Inconnu. As he sketched his plan briefly, he saw that Haskell was not even interested. What was Haskell thinking? Didn't the man realize he had made a fatal mistake? How could he sit there, with that sardonic smile on his face?

Alan summed up his plan: "In three weeks I want to have a patrol lying low on the Inconnu. I'll take Hardsock and Pedneault, and enlist three good 'breeds as special constables—"

Haskell stopped him.

"I'm not interested in your plan, Sergeant. You're merely making a long guess about what they'll do. It sounds thin—"

"About as thin as my guess that they'd take the north branch into the Thal-Azzah!" Alan flung back at him. "I know this country—I know what I'm talking about.

"Now get this straight, Inspector: I'm going to make that trip. I didn't come in here to ask your permission. You've wrecked one patrol. When Superintendent Williamson hears about that, you wont have a chance to wreck any more. You'll keep Dave MacMillan here, you'll keep your hands off this Inconnu trip, or Williamson is going to hear damned quick!"

THAT threat daunted Haskell not at all. He scarcely seemed to have heard.

"Besides the flimsiness of your plan, Sergeant, there's another absurdity about it. You just came back from a patrol that started out with every chance in the world of succeeding. You yourself admit you met the bandits and even had them cornered. But by your weak vacillating fight you allowed them to escape—"

"What's that?" Alan echoed. "A weak vacillating fight? Good Lord!" His memory whipped back to Bill and himself bellying up behind the muskrat-house, and to Larry Younge coming out against six men on open water.

"You failed dismally," Haskell proceeded, in knife-edge voice. "You probably wanted to fail—so you could try to hang something onto me. Those criminals escaped clean, and one of your men was badly shot. After such a performance, don't you think it's a bit ridiculous of you to stand there and baldly ask me to let you lead a thousand-mile, all-summer patrol with five men? Instead—you've been in the Mounted long enough to know what the consequences are of a failure like yours."

Alan stood dazed. Haskell was actually blaming that disaster upon him? Did the man still fail to realize that the patrol had been wrecked by his own crazy orders?

"Consequences?" he repeated. "Consequences for *me!* I warned you we shouldn't split our party. That was the cause of us failing. I predicted just what happened—"

Haskell brushed the words aside. "The consequences of a blundering, botched-up patrol such as you led are usually demotion to the ranks. In an important matter like this I haven't any choice but to make you a constable. Whipple, write out the papers for Baker's demotion."

For moments Alan stared at him. Then he laughed. It was incredible, a travesty. Busted! Busted because of this man's orders. Busted because he had been sent out, tied hand and foot, on a patrol doomed to disaster before it started.

He snapped: "You can quit that scratching, Whipple; I'm not a constable yet. And you, Inspector—if you haven't got sense enough to know you're hanging on by a couple of fingers, I'll tell you about it. When Williamson finds out about you ordering me to split my party, he'll either ask for a resignation or fan you down to the Border where you belong. You've had the whip-hand all along, but now I've got it. You're going to give Dave MacMillan a decent chance, and I'm going to make that patrol to the Inconnu."

Across the desk Haskell surveyed him coldly.

"Just a moment, Baker!" he said. "You said something about my ordering you to split your party. You're blaming me for your failure." He met Alan's eyes without a tremor; he was able to look steadily at Alan, as he added: "I didn't order you to split your detail. I may have suggested it, but that patrol was yours and you're not hanging the blame on—"

"You didn't order me to? You say you didn't order me?"

Dumfounded, unbelieving, Alan stared at the Inspector.

"That's exactly what I said, Sergeant. I gave you no such orders."

Speechless for moments, Alan finally found words. "You're a liar—a sneaking liar! You're trying to crawl out—"

Haskell jerked around to Whipple. "Make a note of that remark." He turned to Alan, and in hard tones, with no hesitation or weakness, he said: "You came in here thinking you had some heavy artillery against me. You meant to *get* me. Whether I gave orders or merely suggested, isn't the question now, Sergeant. The question is: How are you going to prove your charge? Do you happen to possess any documentary evidence, or can you produce any witnesses, that I gave you that order? You can't. Hardsock and Younge were down at the wharf. On the other hand, Constable Whipple, here, was present and heard what you said. So it is the word of two people against yours—and one of them your officer commanding. *What do you think of your heavy artillery now?"*

He smiled sardonically, in triumph. Alan stood mute, thunderstruck, as he groped toward the meaning of Haskell's words. A moment ago he had thought that Haskell had actually forgotten those crazy orders.

The very effrontery of the denial staggered Alan. For perhaps a minute he stood there speechless, staring into the cold taunting eyes of his enemy. It was a tribute to his good sense that he recognized his helplessness. His face was pale; his arms hung limply at his sides. He made no defense, put up no battle. It was all useless.

Presently he was able to say, throatily: "I hadn't thought of that, Inspector. I knew you were tricky, but still I thought you were too near being a man for a thing like that. I've been associating with men like Larry and Bill and Ped for so long that I'd forgotten your kind exists. A lie, a damnable bare-faced lie, from an officer—in that uniform! Good God! If you hadn't said it, I wouldn't have believed."

"Is that all, *Constable?"* Haskell inquired, with a faint sneer on his mouth.

Alan shook with an impulse to reach across the desk and slap the sneer from that face. But he was beaten.

"Yes, that's all. You've got me."

He turned and trudged out the door.

Chapter Nine

AIMLESSLY Alan went up the twilight slope, still dazed by what had just happened.

Without wording the thought consciously, he was aware that something cataclysmic had happened to him tonight and that he had come to a parting of the ways in his life.

He did not enter his cabin. Walls held a sense of imprisonment for him now; he wanted to be under the open skies. A little distance from the cabin door he stopped and leaned against a boulder, a massive granite rock, that seemed to him like a solid earth-rooted friend.

His thoughts were all a confused turmoil. "Busted—a constable—saddled with the whole blame of that disgraceful patrol—the ground cut out from under me by that bare-faced lie!"

The Inspector had been out to get him—*and had got him.* He stood on a level now with Whipple and Burgoon—he, the proud leader of a proud detachment.

A grayish-white mist was beginning to roll up from the cold Mackenzie waters. Far-away across the river his beloved wilderness of great hills was faintly visible—vague masses uplifting their peaks to the sky. Over at timber edge a night wind crooned through the pines in a song of elemental sadness. Chill and delicious, the wind refreshed him and ran like cool, soothing fingers over his tired, aching body.

In the vision of imagination he was looking

four hundred miles away to the heart of the Thal-Azzah, seeing those six bandits camped there on some dry islet, their canoes drawn up, a sentinel alert, and seeing himself with his hard-bitten Northern men slipping up on them through the tall flags. So hauntingly clear, so impossible a picture, it was a torture, and he forced his mind away from it.

One fact came home to him, hard and inexorable: his Inconnu trip was smashed. To hope for any coöperation from Haskell was a fool's wishful thinking. There was nothing on earth he could do—nothing except forget the aching vision of running those six unknown murderers to earth.

Did he dare forget? Dimly through the creeping mist he saw the candle-light of the tiny hospital where Larry, his able silent comrade on many a patrol, lay tossing in pain and fever; where Larry, so strong of body, so proud of his physical powers, was facing the black realization that he would never again go out on patrol with other men, and would never again follow a Strong Woods trail. Jutting out from the barracks he could see the massive outlines of the cement cell where Dave MacMillan, helpless to prove his innocence, awaited the full vengeance of the law. On above the cabin, at a little distance from the towering pine that marked Curt Spaulding's grave, the fresh-hewn lobstick of Jimmy Montgomery was lined against the sky, like a call to Alan—the call of a partner dead to a partner living.

Thinking in hard practical terms, Alan saw that so long as Haskell had power over him, he could not stir a hand. If he were ever to get those criminals, he had to be free. There were several ways open to him. One by one he studied and rejected them, till only the last remained.

For minutes he weighed that possible act. Its cost to him was a terrible cost. It would wipe out his whole police record, his brilliant reputation. It would kill his last chance of ever bringing Haskell to account. It would uproot him and take him for good and all out of this North country.

Torn by doubt and indecision, he wavered. The price seemed too staggering.

PRESENTLY he heard some one come up the terrace and glide past him and go on toward his cabin. The figure was merely a moving blur in the mist, but Alan recognized that light footstep.

He called softly: "Joyce! You wanted to see me?"

At his voice she turned and came toward the boulder, coming out of the mist like a slender girlish apparition.

"Alan! I've been wondering where you—Your cabin was all dark, and I couldn't find you. Those things Dad said—you didn't mind them, Alan?"

"Why no, Joyce. I hardly blame him. Don't you feel bad about that!"

He noticed how spent she was after the terrific strain of these last three days; and he suggested: "Let's sit down, Joyce. I've got something to tell you."

He spread his jacket on the damp grass for her, and sat down facing her in the misty purple darkness.

In eager hope she asked him: "Alan, what did Haskell say about Dad? He's going to release Dad on bail—as you thought?"

Alan shook his head. "He intends to send him outside to Edmonton."

He offered gently: "Joyce, if you want to go along and be near him, I'll pay—I'll see to it that you can. It'd be best for you, and for him too, if you would."

Joyce did not answer at once.

Presently, with the spirited courage he had always loved in her, Joyce asserted:

"Alan, I'm going back home. The Dog-ribs are bringing in their furs next week. They've always been our friends, and they'll help me; I'll send several of their men *en dérouine* to the Hares and Loucheux and get

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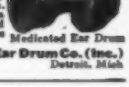

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their furs too. I'll sacrifice all our trade goods and raise money for Dad's defense. It'll be a truer way of fighting for Dad if I go back home."

"But you mustn't be alone there, Joyce, with these river 'breeds knowing your father is out of the country."

"I don't mind being alone. I can take care of myself. It'll be lonesome, but all the time I'll be knowing that I'm doing the right thing and being a real help to Dad."

RELUCTANTLY Alan acquiesced, against his better judgment. A slender girl like her, scarcely out of her 'teens, going back to that isolated post! He must make some arrangement to protect her. It would not take long for those river 'breeds to discover that a different hand was ruling at Endurance.

Joyce asked him: "What happened between you and Haskell, Alan? You were sure you could force him to let you manage this whole case, but he seems to have been high-handed."

Briefly Alan told her what had happened down there in the cabin.

His account left Joyce speechless, in a silent fury, her little fists clenched, her lips parted in astonishment.

"But he can't demote you, Alan!" she cried. "He can't blame *you* for *his* mistake."

"He can't? He's already done it! If I try to fight him, if I make the slightest insubordinate move, he's actually got the power to jail me!"

"But the Inconnu patrol—he'll let you go on that, Alan?"

"And capture those men and get the credit? Not Haskell! He's too wise. That Inconnu patrol is dead. It was our best hope, but now it can't ever be. I could stir up trouble for him—I could bring on an investigation; but that would take months. It'd be too late then; those bandits'll be gone."

She repeated, brokenly: "Gone, gone—yes, it'll be too late then. Alan, that means—means Dad will be found guilty—and sent to prison—or worse!"

For the first time in the years he had known her, Alan saw Joyce break down and cry. He put his arm around her tenderly and pleaded:

"Joyce, please don't! It hasn't happened yet. We've got time—a couple of months—to do something. I'm going to see you through this, Joyce."

As he felt her sobbing against him, his last reluctance about his plan was swept away.

He realized fully that the step he was going to take would be irretraceable. Beyond the other staggering cost of it, his plan would separate him from Joyce—it would put a continent between them and would bind him to Elizabeth.

He rose, brushing away the wreckage of hesitancy, and lifted Joyce up.

"Joyce, there's something I've got to do now. I've got to go. You mustn't stay here. Come." He took her arm, and as they went down the slope—"I want to see you again before I— Some final arrangements with you. . . . . Wont you be down at the wharf in half an hour?"

Wondering at his odd tone, his hard, intent manner, Joyce promised.

At Mrs. Drummond's house he left her and started out along the terrace to Haskell's cabin.

ACROSS the desk he demanded, with no preliminaries:

"I want to buy out."

Haskell watched him uneasily. He had been startled when Alan strode into the cabin so purposeful, so hard of face; and his hand had closed over a heavy paper-weight. He wanted no fight with this powerful sergeant who was in the habit of cleaning up Indian camps by himself.

"To buy out?" he echoed. "You want to buy out of the Mounted?"

"That's what I mean. And tonight! Here! Now!"

Haskell's eyes narrowed in suspicion. He could hardly believe it. He knew how deeply Baker was rooted in his work and friendships and life in this northern Waterways country. And he could scarcely conceive of a man deliberately throwing away a long brilliant police record at one irremediable step.

But there was no doubting Baker's words, no doubting his hard manner. Baker was demanding to buy out—to get out for good. As he studied the Sergeant, Haskell drew back warily. Baker might be laying some trap for him.

He refused. "I'm too short-handed here as it is now—"

"I don't give a whisky-damn about that. I'm buying out."

Haskell's confidence was returning as he saw that Alan intended no physical violence. He objected: "But I don't want you to buy out."

"What you want doesn't cut any ice. I know you don't want me to. You were expecting to ride me. Been smacking your lips over that, ever since you busted me. Do you think I'd shine a putt for a spring-heel Johnny and damned liar—and manage this post for you in between-times? Do you think"—he jerked a thumb at Whipple—"that I'll stand on a level with that button-polisher?"

"If you buy out, your record ends. You'll have to start all over—"

"I'm buying out *for good*. There'll be no starting over again. I'm getting out of the Mounted, out of the country!"

HASKELL debated swiftly. He was not averse to Baker's cutting his own head off; and he saw now there was no trap laid for him. But there were other things to be considered. His sober judgment, casting back over the last nine months, thinking of the score of times Baker had corrected bad mistakes of his and kept the post running smoothly, was whispering to him that he needed the man, needed him desperately. And Elizabeth Spaulding—was she going away with Baker? Was Baker taking her with him?

If she went, his act in busting the Sergeant would be a boomerang against himself.

"I think you're being hasty, Sergeant. You'll regret this a hundred times. You ought to realize that your demotion is only for the time being, and that I intend to put you back—"

Alan nailed him: "You're having some second thoughts. I'm not hasty; I've stood nine months of this. I'm buying out."

"I haven't the authority to let you. You'll have to make out application and wait for permission from Headquarters."

"That's the rule for the close-in detachments. Down north here, where a communication would take several months, it's understood that an officer can accept a buy-out on his own recognizance."

"But it's not the official rule. Under the circumstances I don't choose to accept your papers."

"You *will* choose! I'll make you choose! You've busted me, all right; you've saddled the blame and shame of that patrol on me. But I can bring on an investigation just the same. There's things happened last winter that you can't lie out of. Williamson's coming down here next month. He hasn't got any too much use for you now. If I'm here when he comes, what I'll tell him wont help your standing much."

Haskell lit a cigarette to hide his nervousness. He knew the score of incidents last winter that Baker was referring to. Compared to this last patrol, they were little

things—but little things could start an avalanche.

He asked: "Where are you going—if you get out of service?"

"That'll not be your affair, thank God! I'm leaving here. Tonight. That's all you need to know."

Haskell started a little. Tonight—no boat coming past—it meant Baker was going by himself! Meant Elizabeth would not go with him but would stay here at Endurance!

Very thoughtful, he looked away, debating. Baker's motives, his reasons for this precipitate move, were dark and puzzling. But he saw no way in which they could possibly harm him. Hardsock, an experienced "Northern man," would still be available. Since Elizabeth was going to stay here, at least temporarily, why shouldn't he let Baker go? The farther away he was, the better!

Presently he turned around again.

"I'll consent to your buying out on one condition. Otherwise you'll have to wait for official and regular approval."

"What's the condition?"

"There seems," Haskell said steadily, with his ability to look Alan squarely in the eyes, "to be a difference of opinion between us about the responsibility of this Alooska patrol. If you'll sign a statement stating that you had complete charge of the detail and split your party on your own initiative—if you'll do that, you can buy out. Otherwise you can't."

ALAN wavered. It meant signing a brazen lie, taking all the stinging disgrace upon himself, strengthening Haskell's guilty hand! But then his thoughts leaped to Jimmy and Larry and Dave MacMillan, and to Joyce as she came to him out of the night mist, pinning her last hope to him. What did it matter—his signing a lie? Would it change one jot or tittle of God's truth? What did a rag of paper matter as weighed against his plan, his ache to be off on his long free-flung hunt for those murderers, avenging his partners, shielding Joyce?

He said: "I'll sign. Load it as heavy as you like. But don't knock Hardsock or Pedneault or Younge."

Haskell wrote out the declaration of responsibility. Alan read it. As he wrote his name, he sneered:

"I'd frame that, Inspector, and hang it on the wall. It's a certificate of your—dishonor."

Not answering, Haskell went on looking up the remaining enlistment period and figuring the amount. Whipple brought over the forms and filled in the data. Both Alan and Haskell, with the constable as witness, signed the numerous official sheets of the procedure.

Folding his copy of it, Alan walked out the door, out of service, out of the Mounted Police.

Chapter Ten

IN his cabin Alan took off his uniform and changed to civilian clothes. It seemed to him he was stripping off his foot-free adventuresome life with that uniform.

On the bed he laid out his broken rifle, his service revolver and all other Government property, where Bill could get it and check it in for him. Some personal belongings—letters, documents, and especially the dozen-odd presents Joyce had given him—he placed in a trunk for safe-keeping. What money he had on hand, several hundred dollars, he buttoned carefully in his shirt pocket. His expenses on this trip ahead would be heavy; he would have to borrow. But he was going to take that Victoria job, and he knew Colonel Steele would gladly give him a salary advance.

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Then he made up a slender pack—a single blanket, a change of clothes, food for a week or ten days. That was all—no camping outfit, no weapons, no equipment for wilderness travel.

He hurried through these preparations; he wanted to be away from here before dawn, before the sun stood mellow and warm on the shimmering pine hills. He was glad that the mist and gloomy twilight hid all sight of his beloved wilderness across the river. If only he could slip away at night, he would not feel the hurt so bitterly.

As he was buckling his pack together, Elizabeth unexpectedly came into the cabin. When she stepped nearer, into the candle-glow, Alan saw by her expression that she had heard about his run-in with Haskell.

As she stepped into the light she exclaimed: "Alan! That MacMillan girl told Mrs. Drummond that Haskell demoted you—that you're a constable—that he put all the blame of this patrol on you!"

"That's what he did," Alan answered, straightening up, facing her.

"And you're going to stand for that!" Her voice rose—sharp, nagging. "You're going to be his orderly—a constable, disgraced, bossed around! I'd think that *any man* would—would—"

SHE checked herself as she saw the Government property laid out on the bed and noticed that Alan was in civilian clothes.

He said quietly: "You were a bit hasty. I *didn't* stand for it. I bought out."

"*Bought out?*"

"I'm out of the Mounted. Out for good!"

Elizabeth gasped. For moments she stared at him, incredulous. During all the winter past she had plotted, argued, threatened, to make him leave service. Now, with an unexpectedness that dazed her, he *was* out! He would surely take that Victoria offer; next winter she would be living in Victoria!

Her heart leaped at the thought, and her whole manner toward Alan changed. But she saw that Alan, sick at heart over his "freedom," was fighting down an anguish at leaving this country.

She drew near him, slipped an arm about him; a softness came into her voice.

"Dear, you're sorry to be out. I'm sorry to see you so hurt. You didn't want to leave here, Alan. I—did want you to; but I wouldn't have insisted. I'd have given in to you, dear, before I'd seen you unhappy. In the long run, we'll not regret; it'll be the best for us."

Alan watched the candle-sheen in her hair, the auburn hair that always brought him poignant memories of her brother Curt. His thoughts, leaping ahead to his lone-handed venture, were scarcely with her at all, yet he was bewildered at her sudden change, by her show of affection.

She asked him: "And now—you're going to take—we'll be down at Victoria now, Alan? Wont Colonel Steele be glad when he hears! Alan, he's one of the best friends you ever had. You'll write him right away?"

"I suppose so. Yes, I'm going to take that job. Not much else to turn to."

She noticed how cold, how unmoved he was; and she went on, half-whispering:

"On our way outside, we can be married at Edmonton, and have that trip we planned in the Blackfoot Selkirks. And we'll have—we can afford to have now!—a cabin back in Vancouver Island; back in the mountains by ourselves, Alan."

He merely said, gesturing at the alcove: "I'm leaving Curt's keepsakes there. You'll watch after them, wont you?" And he added: "I'm leaving here tonight, Elizabeth."

"Leaving here—tonight?" Her eyes went to the pack on the floor. Suddenly startled, she looked up at him again.

Alan saw the question in her eyes. He felt he owed some explanation to the girl he was engaged to.

He explained: "I'm pitching off on a trip, Elizabeth. By myself. I'm going after those men that shot up two of my friends. Haskell blocked a patrol I wanted to make. To go after them I had to be free. I don't know how long it'll take me. Maybe three weeks—maybe six. I can't even say exactly what I'll be doing or where I'll be. I'd like for you to wait here."

Something in his manner stopped Elizabeth from questioning him. Something told her that in this present hour it was not well to question or oppose Alan Baker.

She acquiesced: "I'll wait, dear. If you can't tell me, or don't care to, it doesn't matter. But you wont put yourself in danger, Alan? Wont you promise me that much?"

"I'll be safe enough." He was thinking of Joyce MacMillan, two hundred miles from Fort Endurance, back in the Alooska wilderness. He said dully: "When I'm through with this business, I'll send you a radiogram, Elizabeth. We'll go over to Victoria then."

"I'll wait; I'll wait here for you. But, Alan, before you go,"—she stood on tiptoe, reproaching him, begging,—"aren't you going to—to tell me good-by?"

Alan bent and kissed her, as she invited. But he did it as a thing expected of him. He felt her breath on his cheek, her arm tightening about him, her body pressed against his. He was subtly but unmistakably aware of a willingness about her; she wanted him to linger; she would have stayed with him there in the cabin. It surprised, it shocked him, after all these months when she had been a marble goddess.

When she had gone, he buckled his pack, and caught up his hat. As he started to snuff the two candles in the alcove, he heard a thumping footstep on the threshold and turned to see Bill Hardsock. In a flash he guessed that Bill had been waiting outside, not wanting to come in while Elizabeth was there.

"Alan! Hell's blue blazes!" Bill was all but incoherent as he advanced across the cabin. "Say it isn't so! I heard—wasn't meaning to listen . . . . Joyce told me part of it, and I just heard you tell 'Lizabeth . . . . He didn't bust you—he didn't dare! And blame you for splitting our patrol! You didn't buy out—"

"That's what I did, Bill. He busted me, blamed me. What's worse, he wouldn't let us make the Inconnu trip. I couldn't stand that. I'm out. Leaving here. Right now."

HE never forgot the moment that followed. Bill's face turned gray and his jaw dropped; he stood in stupefied shock, with a look of misery on his blunt bulldog features.

"You're—leaving—us," he gulped. "You're—pitching away—for good. You always stood up for us men—against Haskell. You and me—pretty good partners—and now—you wont be here any more, Alan."

"Bill, shake yourself together and listen: I'm going after those bandits. There's several things you've got to do for me. One is, I want you to cut aside from patrols whenever you can and visit Joyce and see she's safe. Watch those Pelican Channel 'breeds. You and I know they're a dangerous lot. Tell 'em you'll arrest the first one you catch on the Alooska.

"Another thing: I'm giving you this cabin and what's in it, except for a little personal stuff that I'll get sometime or else send for. And you attend to turning in my issue stuff there on the bed.

"Then there's one last thing you can do for me. Got any free time coming in the next couple of weeks?"

"I don't know. Yes, must have—three or four days—way we've been hitting the ball all winter."

"Two days will be enough. I need a little help on my plan; and you, here at Endurance, you can give me a hand. It's not much, but it'll mean a lot to me. I'll tell you what I've got in mind, so you'll understand."

IN a few terse sentences that left Bill gasping and swearing at so staggering a scheme, Alan sketched his plan.

He demanded: "Now, Bill, can I depend on you to give me that help? I'll be banking on it; I'll be in a hell of a hole if you don't do it."

Bill was angered at the mere suggestion; he swore by all the nether regions to carry out those instructions to the letter.

"And you'll keep quiet about this, Bill? Don't tell Ped, Elizabeth, Drummond—anybody. If it ever gets out, it'd wreck the whole idea, and I'd probably land in a penitentiary."

"I'll keep quiet as a dead dog. I wont breathe a word. But, Alan, why in hell, way we've hung together, why can't I be in on your trick?" He pleaded: "Let me go along, Alan."

"It'd mean desertion for you. Haskell would give you the limit. And you've got to watch after Joyce. My work is a one-man job, anyway." He reached out his hand. "Here, Bill, this is our *Klahowya*." He forced a smile and a jest to cover his own emotion: "I've seen lots of better-looking fellows than you, Bill, but never a man I'd rather have with me when we're bellying up behind a muskrat-house or knocking hell out of a camp of drunken Smokies. We'll keep in touch, Bill. You write to me. Lord knows but what you and I, sometime on ahead, might get together again."

They shook hands.

Alan hurried down the slope to the trading-store. Factor Drummond had not gone to bed. The news of the patrol, of his old friend Dave MacMillan being arrested and faced with such overwhelming evidence of guilt, had upset him. With chair leaned back against the counter, he was futilely trying to read a month-old Edmonton *Bulletin*.

His chair came down as Alan entered and strode into the circle of light.

"What the devil, Alan—civilian clothes!"

Alan was weary of people's astonishment. He wasted no time with explanations.

"Drummond, where's old Dad Pence? I saw him here when we got back this evening."

Drummond pointed behind the counter. Alan walked around, up the narrow aisle, and found old Pence asleep on a pile of hides.

He had passed his three-score and ten, old Dad Pence—prospecting, trapping, water-dogging, what-not. He had made fortunes on Indian Creek and in the Cassiars before Alan was born, and guilelessly had lost them to men sharper than he. He had come down to the twilight of life penniless, homeless, childless, hungry with a great hunger for human company—a white-whiskered old waif who trapped back in the western hills in winter, brought in a few mangy furs each spring, and hung around the fort all summer just to be near somebody.

But old Dad Pence could still handle a rifle with the best of the youngsters; and a reputation for magic which he had acquired over in the Cassiars among the witch-killing Indians, still clung to him and put fear into primitive hearts.

SHAKING him wide enough awake that he understood what was wanted of him, Alan explained. He was to go back to the Big Alooska with Joyce and watch after her. He was to keep in touch with Bill Hardsock. Bill would help him out if anything unforeseen should happen. Under no circumstances was he to wander off in the bush and leave Joyce alone.

Old Pence nodded. "I'll do it, b'y, jist as you say. I'll try not to fergit and wanner off in the bush. I'll look arter Joyce; you don't worry."

Alan thrust a handful of bills into his

pocket, and started hastily back around the counter.

Mrs. Drummond had heard his voice. With a shawl around her shoulders she had come out into the store, to hear more about all these strange happenings tonight.

Alan said to her: "Elizabeth will be with you a few weeks longer, Mrs. Drummond. It was mighty kind for you to have her with you since Curt died. When I send for her or come for her, I'll square with you for what I owe—"

"Why, don't think of that, Alan." She too was looking at his civilian clothes, his pack. "Are you going away?"

He nodded.

"What do you want me to do about Jimmy's little girl? I'm to take care of her till I hear from you? I mean, I'll be glad to, Alan; she's a sweet little thing." In the significant tone of a woman with a grudge Mrs. Drummond added: "She's no trouble at all for *me* to look after."

"For *you?*" Alan frowned. "Why—why, I told Ashmun to give her to Elizabeth."

"That's what he did. But Elizabeth refused . . . . I guess she just doesn't want to bother with—"

Mrs. Drummond wisely stopped there, for she saw Alan understood. He merely said, "Oh!" in surprise; but Mrs. Drummond knew he was keenly ashamed that the girl he was going to marry had heartlessly refused to care for the child of his dead partner.

He turned to the factor.

"I want to buy your motor-canoe, Drummond. How much?"

"To buy it? You making a trip? Go ahead, take it and use it, Alan."

"But I'm not bringing it back. I'm leaving this country in it. How much?"

Drummond was all tangled in Alan's swift words. "The canoe isn't worth a lot. . . . . You're *leaving* this country? The motor cost me a hundred, but it's three years old . . . . You're not bringing it back? I guess fifty dollars, Alan; but what in the name of sin—"

Alan gave him the fifty and strode out.

DOWN the terrace at the steamer landing, Joyce was waiting for him, as he had asked her. Alan laid his pack in Drummond's canoe, untied the painter and stood holding it, hat in hand, for a last word with Joyce.

He said slowly, as though to lengthen these last moments with her: "Joyce, I'm going away. I'm going after those six men. Bill will tell you something about it. I arranged with him to visit you whenever he can, and old Dad Pence is going back to the Alooska to be company for you."

Though she asked no questions about his trip, her dark eyes were big with wonder.

"Joyce," he instructed her, "I'd like for you, there at the trading-post, to question those Indians and *métis* when they bring in peltry. You might pick up some information about those six men. When old Mugwa-Etthen and his band come in, I'd especially like for you to find out where they intend to pass the summer. It'll be up north of you, at some tangle of creeks where they can put out fish weirs, but you find out just where."

"I'll do it, Alan. And if there's anything else, to help you—"

"There isn't—except to keep your courage up, and be—be careful of yourself. It's brave of you to go back there. I don't know any other girl on earth with the courage to do that. You've been a real daughter to your father all along. Joyce, if you'll promise to take care of yourself there on the Alooska, I'll go away feeling a mighty lot happier. I'll be worrying about you—"

She said simply: "I'll get along, Alan." But a flush suffused her cheeks at what he said, at his words of ardent praise.

Her hand seemed to him ridiculously small for his big roughened clasp. It seemed all wrong to be bidding her good-by in the same way as he would Pedneault or Bill. The impulse which had come to him on that other dawn up the Alooska, swept over Alan; he wanted to take her into his arms and kiss her, make her feel that his strength was hers too in the battle to save her father. But he remembered the expression of her eyes that had checked him then; remembered the steady questioning gaze which said to him that a kiss would be a sacred thing to her now and must be significant—or must not be at all. And that memory stopped him now.

With a handclasp, a final word of cheer about her father, he stepped into the motor-canoe, started the engine, and headed the boat out from shore. Looking back, he watched Joyce's slender figure grow more and more wraith-like in the mist until his eyes no longer could see her.

Chapter Eleven

AT the MacMillan trading-post Joyce was awaiting a visit from Bill Hardsock. A young Loucheux, John Tabanask, had brought a note from Bill, saying he intended to cut aside from a routine patrol down the Mackenzie, and would be along late this evening.

Free for a little while, Joyce had slipped away from the post, down to the Alooska, down its bank a rifle-shot to a brook-mouth, where a large shelf of rock jutted out into the river. The spot had always been her favorite swimming-place, with a thirty-foot depth of still water to dive into and the moss-padded rock to lie on and bask in the mellow life-giving sun.

Too tired to go swimming today, she had gone down there to meet Bill, for she wished to talk to him alone.

The heavy rains had ceased for a few hours. With the long Northern twilight gradually deepening, the hour was brooding and melancholy. In the woods behind her the white-crowns were piping their wistful evening song. Great owls on eerie wing were drifting back and forth across the stream, hooting their weird eight-noted calls.

This last week had been a feverishly busy one for her. In spite of heavy incessant rains the Dogrib bands had come in; and "lone-fire" Indians and 'breeds were always about the place. Out of the nowhere of the wilderness they came, from single families to bands of thirty and forty, with dogs and skin tents and all their earthly possessions; and after trading for traps, ammunition, tobacco and sugar and flour, a bit of bright calico for the women, a trinket for the children, they left on some canoe highway, vanishing for another year into the nowhere they had come from.

With no hesitation Joyce was sacrificing the entire trading stock. Word of her good bargains had gone out by moccasin telegraph, and the peltry was rolling in beyond all her expectations. Her days were from twenty to twenty-four hours long. . . . . Hasty meals for herself and old Dad Pence. Sleep in broken bits when she could snatch an hour. Sorting and grading furs as expertly as any man. Haggling over prices when some dusky customer thought he could cheat this mere slip of a girl. Answering the endless question: "How much for this fox-felluh, otter-felluh, mink-felluh, marten-felluh—huh?" At times feeling the hungry eyes of some insolent sub-chief or lusty young 'breed following her. Asserting over and over: "I can't give you any fight-water; there isn't a drop in the house." Passing out pain-killer free, and prescribing kerosene for itchy little heads. . . . . It was work for any two men, and she was doing it lone-handed, taking in the fur-dollars to fight her father's battle.

SHE had faithfully carried out Alan's instructions. She had learned where old Mugwa-Etthen's band was camped, and had done a bit of detective work on her own account. Some of the men who came to

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trade, wilderness bush-lopers of no fixed home or band, had roamed from Herschell to Chippewyan, from the Liard to the Coppermine, during the past fall and winter. Questioning them carefully, she tried to find some one who had seen or heard of those six bandit strangers. But she failed to glean the slightest hint of information.

THE mystery of their sudden appearance engrossed her, as it had Alan; and with good reason it made her uneasy. Those men were hiding in the Thal-Azzah, not many hours distant. They were an unknown danger. They had been bold in their first crime. Now after the patrol had failed they must feel doubly confident. The one man in the country who could outwit and out-fight them was hundreds of miles away, following some strange and puzzling adventure of his own. Knowing in her heart that her father was innocent, she believed that those men had put that fatal pack of furs in the shed because of some animus against him, and she reasoned that their hostility might extend to her, his daughter.

And then, two days ago, four Yellowknife men had come down the Alooska, bringing a pack of the stolen furs, and bearing a ghastly burden in their canoe—two murdered Loucheux, young men whom Joyce had known. The Yellowknives had found the bodies on a riffle between two islands and found the fur pack caught in an overhanging willow. Joyce listened to their account and looked at the bodies, and pieced together the story of how those bandits had traveled faster than Alan had calculated. They had tossed out several of the heaviest, cheapest bales. Meeting those two young Loucheux, they had forced the Indians into their canoes, forced them to help paddle; and then, at the end of that frantic dash, had callously shot them and flung their bodies overboard.

The story of that bestial cruelty had nearly overwhelmed Joyce. It struck a secret terror into her, and she was desperately glad that 'breeds and Indians *were* around the post constantly. There were times, when she thought of those vicious and brutal criminals so near her, that she wanted to flee back to the safety of the post and the mothering kindness of Mrs. Drummond.

What was Alan Baker doing? He was off on some mission by which he hoped to catch those bandits. From an unguarded slip Bill made, Joyce knew he had gone entirely out of the country.

Elizabeth had wanted him to get out of service. He was out now. Elizabeth had wanted him to take that Victoria job. He probably would take it now. Elizabeth had had her way with him; the situation which had held her and Alan apart now existed no longer.

At Fort Endurance, Elizabeth had made a remark to her, the morning she left, about meeting her possibly in Edmonton. It was a covert and heartless allusion to her father's trial; and Elizabeth had said "we" in a manner to leave no doubt she meant Alan and herself.

For more than a year Joyce had seen Alan Baker slipping away from her, little by little. She had fought for her secret hopes as one will fight in the face of death. She wanted Alan; her days were like a passionate cry for him. He was the meaning and purpose of life to her.

IN the twilight she heard the drone of Bill's motor-canoe down the Alooska. When the canoe swung around a bend, she stood up and waved. Catching sight of her on the jutting rock, Bill guided in alongside, stepped out and laid a heavy stone on the painter rope.

He looked hungry and tired to Joyce as she greeted him. She knew he had made his long patrol at a fast clip, sacrificing sleep and meals, in order to slip in this visit to her. A score of times last winter he had done that, when it meant a long, hard grind on snowshoes.

Bill held a warm place in her heart. He had a man's stubborn will-power; he was honest and open as daylight; he was loyal clean through. Joyce knew that Bill loved her, in a dogged hopeless way, asking nothing more than to do favors for her and be always dependable when she needed some one.

She invited him: "Bill, let's go up to the post. You're tired. And I'll get you a bite to eat."

"I can't, Joyce," he reluctantly refused. "I've got to light out for Endurance. With Alan gone and Larry shot up, Ped and I have to hit the ball proper. I just wanted to drop past and see everything's all right with you. I heard about that pack of furs and those—those two Loucheux men. Met the Yellowknives down on the Mackenzie, going on in to Endurance."

A shudder swept through Joyce. She made herself forget.

They sat down there on the rock. Noticing Bill fumbling in his pipe pocket, Joyce insisted that he should smoke, and she cupped a match for him in her own hands.

He asked: "How've you been making out, Joyce?"

"Better than I even expected. I've taken in an awful lot of furs."

"That's good. But I mean, any trouble with these 'breeds or Smokies?"

"Not the slightest bit," Joyce assured him. That was not exactly true; a couple of incidents last week had been a little ugly. But she felt she could guard herself against those cowardly men; the incidents, as Bill would say, were nothing to write home about.

She asked rather hesitantly: "Has anything happened at Fort Endurance, Bill?" She was thinking of Elizabeth waiting there; thinking of that fearful question, with a dread that crowded out even her father's trouble. It took an effort to speak of it.

HE said: "No, nothing much has happened. I moved up to Alan's cabin. Haskell has made Whipple a corporal. Imagine that! The new doctor for Herschell Island came past on his way down north, and looked at Larry. He couldn't do any more than Father Claverly already's done. Larry's getting some strength back, and that chest wound is past the danger point; but his leg is all busted. The doctor said to send him outside to Edmonton soon as he's strong enough to travel, and have some operation on it; but he said that Larry'd be permanently crippled."

"Have they sent—is Dad still there?"

"Yes. We can't spare a man to take him out. He'll be there a week or ten days yet. A constable is coming down from Norman to take him to Edmonton."

"You'll tell him about my good luck here, Bill? And tell him I'll be with him as soon as I close out this post?"

Bill nodded. Personally he hoped that this news might lift Dave MacMillan out of his despondency. Dave's state of mind was causing Bill anxiety. Resenting any kindness, he had sunk into a sullen mood, uncaring, hopeless—a man brooding on self-destruction.

Joyce at last forced herself to ask:

"Have you heard anything at all of Alan, Bill?"

"No, not a word. I don't expect to for some time."

"You must know where he is and what he's doing—"

Bill realized she was asking him to tell her of Alan's venture. He knew he could trust her; he wanted to tell her; but Alan had asked him not to let her know where he'd gone, and Alan might have personal reasons for it.

"No, I don't know," he said slowly. "I'd just be guessing."

"But he's coming back, sometime, to Endurance?" Joyce persisted.

"He may come back and may not. But not to stay. He's out of service. They don't often let a man in when he's bought out."

Joyce felt herself nearing an abyss, with each question taking her a step closer. But she could not stop.

"How do you know that, Bill?"

"Why, he's going to take that job in Victoria."

"Did he say—anything about when he'll get married?"

"He didn't exactly say when, but it'll be as soon as he's carried through this scheme of his."

Bill noticed she sat very still, motionless, her whole body tensed. But he was no reader of people; he knew nothing whatsoever of what Alan meant to her, or of the tragedy he himself was bringing her on this innocent visit.

He glanced at the purpling river. He ought to be leaving, ought to be past a dangerous channel forty miles downstream before deep dark.

A question came from Joyce:

"He and—and Elizabeth have—decided, then, Bill?"

"Yes. She's waiting for him to come for her or send for her. They've made plans to be married in Edmonton and have their honeymoon in the Selkirks and then go on over to Victoria."

Joyce asked one last question. She asked it calmly, without faltering or even pausing on the precipice edge.

"Did Elizabeth say that? Or did he—"

"I overheard them, that night he left. They planned it together, there in his cabin."

JOYCE was aroused by Dad Pence calling for her. Raising her head from her arms, she looked around. Gropingly she realized that she was there on the jutting rock, numbed with cold—with a cold that was more than physical.

Dawn had come. The dark hours had passed. It took her moments to realize. Time had stood still for her since she told Bill good-by.

A sleety drizzle had started to fall. The day was cold—one of those cold summer days that are unnatural and terribly desolate.

Old Pence was shouting again and again, with a quaver of fear in his voice at discovering she had been gone for several hours. His shouts roused Joyce. She rose up, stiff and cramped, and answered him:

"I'm here. I'm coming."

Before going up the river bank she had the presence of mind to go down to the water edge and bathe her face and hands and smooth back her hair.

At the wharf old Pence looked at her perplexedly when she came up to him.

"Why, gal, where've you been? I woke up, heerd no stirrin' in your room, went out and peeked into the winder; an' you gone, couldn't find hide ner hair of you. . . . . It gi' me an awful fright."

"I'm sorry," Joyce managed. "I fell asleep down there after Bill left. I guess I must have been tired—"

Old Pence never doubted. He sympathized: "You must be near froze, honey. I know last week about fagged you out—with all this tradin', an' worritin' about your dad."

She went back to the trading-store with old Pence, and prepared breakfast for him. She could eat nothing herself, but drank a little coffee. Over his birch-marl pipe old Pence began whittling again at the "story-stick" he was carving these days. The stick was partly a reminder, like a string about a person's finger, not to wander off forgetfully into the woods; and partly it was a long-standing ambition of his, for with his razor-keen, six-bladed knife he was carving the story of his life.

He noticed Joyce's exceeding paleness and her exhaustion, and bade her:

"Now you got to go an' rest, gal. I'll 'tend to the furs this mornin', if anybody comes."

Joyce went into her room. It seemed so cold; she could not get warm; the chill seemed to have pierced her through and through. She kindled a fire in her small sheet-iron stove and put in wood, and then lay down on the bed.

From the dresser Alan's picture looked down at her. She did not glance away, but looked at it steadily, as she lay there so motionless and quiet.

IT seemed to Joyce, as she lay there gazing up at Baker's picture and seeing her course so clearly, that if she could destroy his image there on the dresser, if only she had the courage to do that, it would be a symbol of destroying his image in her heart. And it would not be hard—not nearly so hard as what she had gone through last winter. She had traversed that path of renunciation then; she had in reality retraced only a little part of it, for her hopes had never been confident.

After a while she got up from the bed, and going over to the dresser, began taking out of it all of Baker's letters to her. They dated back across six years—addressed to her here, at her college, at Ottawa—all of them carefully treasured. Pack by pack they went into the stove.

There was good augury for Joyce in the firm and unhesitant way she set about burning them.

He had given her presents—a costly old-fashioned lavallière which had been his mother's, a miniature hope-chest of Indian-silk kerchiefs which had been the envy of her college friends; a gold-and-ivory hunting knife, a wrist-watch—his graduation present—and a dozen less expensive gifts. Joyce laid aside the lavallière to send to Elizabeth; but the other gifts she destroyed by fire.

She was not vindictive nor angry. She hated to destroy things which had cost Alan so dearly. Alan had been good to her, in a friend's way. Even now he was facing unknown danger and hardships to save her father. She made it clear to herself that in destroying his gifts she meant nothing derogatory to him. But there must be no mementoes and no looking back.

She took his picture from the dresser, and burned it.

Afterwards she sat by the table writing a long letter to her bureau chief in Ottawa, telling him frankly about her father, her hope to see her father vindicated and then to bring him over to Ottawa with her; and asking him if his former promise of a position whenever she wished to return was still good.

The little stove was cherry-red along its sides; it had driven the chill away; Joyce left a warm glow gradually creeping through her body. She was tired now; a drowsy, not unpleasant languor was stealing over her. She thought she would lie down and rest—just a few minutes.

AT noon, hours later, when old Pence looked in, he was pleased to find her plunged into a dreamless sleep. The secret worry he had noted on her face this last week seemed to have gone now. Her features were pale, but there was a look of peace on them—of some strange spiritual peace of heart.

Tiptoeing quietly away, he went back to his story-stick and pipe, to his guesses about the mystery of those six bandit strangers and the deeper mystery of where Alan Baker was, of what lone-handed venture Baker was on.

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COME BACK TO ME SOON

(Continued from page 45)

the Lord Allah!—had the wretched habit of hanging robbers in chains from the top of the Gate of the Father of Lions. This very morning Mehmet had seen some malefactors swinging in the breeze, the ravens picking at their eyes; and he did not like the memory—was about to overcome temptation by turning on his heel, when he heard a voice drifting down from the wall.

It was a woman's voice, soft but sibilant, speaking in a headlong whisper, a sobbing appeal:

"Please—oh, please!"

He was startled. He looked up, caught a fleeting glimpse of a tiny, pale, oval face. But immediately, the small head was withdrawn; her words feathered into a smothered, incoherent wail of fear; and there came another voice, a man's, violent, guttural:

"*Wah*—O Nurmahal—O creature without shame—to address a passing stranger!"

And Mehmet heard the sound of a hand slapping bare flesh, heard a woman's shriek, a shriek that pierced the night air—that, somehow, pierced his heart. And he called out:

"Here, by the Prophet, is myself to your rescue, O soul of three roses!"

The wall was high. But a few feet from the ground ran a narrow ledge whence he might clutch the balustrade. He tried it; did not succeed, his long sword getting between his legs and tripping him. So he dropped the weapon—he would pick it up afterward—and once more mounted the ledge. He swung himself up, balanced for a moment on the balustrade, fell on his hands and knees, was on his feet again in a jiffy—saw, at the farther end of the roof, cowering against the wall of the main building, a young girl.

Very distinctly he noticed red finger-marks on her pale cheek. She was doubtless the woman who had shrieked, who had been struck.

Then he saw the man who, as doubtless, had struck her. He was a huge Tartar, well over six feet tall, with brawny arms and stout, oak-like legs. Ah, and his face, savage, unhuman, with its broad forehead, its flat nose, its thick lips curled in a cruel smile, as he advanced toward the intruder, slow and ominous and ponderous and rather ironic.

His right hand gripped a sword. A second, in a silver scabbard, rode on his left hip; and Mehmet wished he could get hold of it. Steel in his fist, and the chances would be even—were not even now, he being weaponless. So he did what any sensible man would have done: he ran away. Like a hare he ran, round and round the roof, the Tartar after him, yelling: "Defend yourself, O most cowardly of pimples!"—which was by way of being a grim jest, since Mehmet was unarmed.

THE latter kept receding swiftly. Then all at once, as the Tartar passed the girl, she stopped him by sticking out a foot. He stumbled, cursed her—and she used the opportunity to jerk the second sword from his waist-shawl. She tossed it over to Mehmet. It cut through the air like a streak of silver. He caught it, drew the blade, was out at the other with a clatter of iron.

Lucky for him that the street was deserted and that the people in the palace seemed fast asleep. Lucky that nobody heard the song of strife nor saw the fantastic, extravagant sight—the two men up there, on the roof, black silhouettes in the white moon-rays, stepping a grotesque dance of death—death that came suddenly, as Mehmet's point pierced the other below the heart—as the man trembled, with a whirling movement, spinning like a gigantic top; as he tried to steady himself—could not—tumbled from the roof into the lane below, giving a cry, just a single cry, high, weak, ineffectual:

"Oh—"

Mehmet looked from the balustrade. The Tartar lay on the ground, curled up like a poisoned dog.

"*La illah ul' Ullah!*" Mehmet mumbled a decent prayer; then felt a soft hand touching his and saw the girl who had come to his side. He was astonished. He had expected her to faint.

"A very bad man was this Rustum Bek," she said calmly. "May his soul not find salvation in the hereafter!"

AFTER a moment she added: "Take me away, quick, O hero!"

"Where to?"

"Anywhere! Only,"—she shuddered,—"away from this place!"

He put one foot across the balustrade.

"I shall climb down," he told her. "I shall open my arms, and you must jump. Afraid?"

"Not with you there to catch me!"

He was about to descend—and drew back hurriedly. For at the entrance of the lane a Hindu was passing, happened to look, saw the sprawled body, ran up. Swiftly Mehmet ducked behind the balustrade, pulling the girl to his side. They crouched there, peered down.

By this time the Hindu had reached the dead man, seemed to recognize the features, gave a shrill yell:

"Ah, by Shiva!"

He ran away, returning a moment later with a dozen other men. They too recognized Rustum Bek. They broke into long-drawn cries of grief; and Mehmet, who knew how lightly a human life was reckoned in India, turned to the girl with a wondering, low-voiced question:

"Who was this Rustum Bek?"

"A powerful man, major-domo to the Maharajah of Karabad."

Mehmet was familiar with the name. The Maharajah was the Grand Moghul's cousin and captain-general of his armies.

"And," he demanded, "this is his palace?"

"Yes."

"And you are—"

"I am to be his wife, his fourth wife, tomorrow, unless you save me."

"As I shall, by the honor of my nose!" He smiled. "What is your name, O delight?"

"Nurmahal," she said; and she added how she had been captured, a few weeks earlier, when the Moghuls had invaded Rajputana to carry there the might and pomp of Islam; told him in a hurried whisper how the Rajput princes had ridden to strife accompanied by their women and children, so that the latter, according to the ancient custom, might kill themselves if their lords should die. She had gone with her parents. She had watched the opposing forces clash on the field of Panipet. She had heard the war-cry of her countrymen ring out—"*Har! Har! Mahadeo!* The fire is on the hills!"—while their saffron-robed horsemen galloped to the attack, their helmets garlanded with bridal coronets of jasmin and marigold, their eyes reddened by opium.

She had heard the Moghuls' answering taunt—"*Din! Din! Fateh Mohammed!* Here come the sons of the sword!"—as they spurred on their shaggy ponies. She had seen her father's death, her mother's suicide, had been about to plunge the dagger into her own breast, when an enemy trooper had caught the point of the weapon on his iron gauntlet. He had plucked her from amidst the horses' trampling feet, the prodding, steel-shod tusks of the elephants, the sword-rimmed wheels of the war-chariots, and had taken her before his master, the Maharajah of Karabad.

Brutally the latter had torn the veil from her face. He had stared at her, had blown a kiss into the air, had exclaimed with ribald laughter:

"Three wives I have. One is Fathma, and she is as sweet as honey—and as stupid as a bleating sheep. And there is Zobeid, who is clever as Beelzebub—but one of her eyes looks west, the other east. There is also Surya, my chief wife, who is both pretty and clever. Only—dear Allah!—she has the temper of a wildcat and a mouth like a running tap. You, O girl of the Rajputs, are pretty; you seem clever, and belike you will bridle your tongue and your temper. At all events, I shall take a chance. You will be my fourth wife when we return to Delhi!"

And the wedding was to be on the morrow; and this very night she had escaped—as far as the roof, where Rustum Bek had surprised her—Rustum Bek now dead, and ever more men crowding into the lane below, yelling, excited. . . . . And so she had no time to answer Mehmet's query how she had succeeded in leaving the harem, and whispered:

"Please—take me away."

HE was more than willing. For she was lovely, lovely, with her short, straight nose, her bluish-black hair folded like wings over her tiny ears, her eyes like deep wells beneath the hooded lids. Yes—he would take her away. But—how? Their retreat down the lane was cut off, he reminded her; and she replied that quickly, before the people inside were roused, they must go through the palace.

He was stout of limb and spirit. Still, to pass through the lion's den? Hopeless! He told her so; and she said:

"What else can we do? Besides, the house is very large, with many rooms, many corridors and stairs."

"Many places in which to play hide-and-seek with death, eh?"

"Yes. But we must try it."

She spoke calmly, and he chuckled. The pluck of her, like a well-tempered blade! He asked the way into the house, and she pointed to a door directly in back of them. To his question where it led, she answered that she did not know; and when he demanded how, then, she had found her way out on the roof, she said:

"There is another door—you cannot see it from here—around the corner to the left. That is how I came."

"Why not go the same way?"

"Impossible! It connects with the harem. It must be the first door for you and me—wherever it leads, O hero!"

Slowly, inch by inch, they crept away from the balustrade; rose when they reached the wall where they were safe from prying eyes below, thanks to the width of the roof. There was a brass knob. He began to turn it, warily, noiselessly.

Beyond this door lay—what?

Death, most likely. Dread death by torture.

He shrugged his shoulders; and—was it not like him?—with death so close, yet closer to him this soft, small girl, he whispered into her ear: "I love you!"

"I love you!"

He kissed her. His last kiss on earth, he told himself. . . . .

No. Not his last. For he felt her lips yield to his. So he kissed her again.

A MOMENT later, he opened the door. They crossed the threshold. No sound came from that part of the palace. Nor was there a light. Pitch-dark it was, as they walked along, and the silence turgid and clogging, like a pall. No noise, but their measured breathing, the slurring of their feet, and, occasionally, the *tchk-tchk-tchk* of a scorpion scurrying for cover. They kept

along a corridor which twisted and turned, rose and dipped, like a crazy stone snake. Minutes elapsed—minutes that were to Mehmet like hours, like eternities. He gave a sigh of relief when, at last, the corridor broadened to a hall, when he saw a wedge of light.

Moonlight it was, broken at a sharp angle by the jutting out of iron window shutters left slightly ajar. Moonlight stabbed in with lavender and frosted silvery-blue like the wings of a moth. Moonlight danced and trembled with a thousand rainbow facets on—Allah! he stopped, stared—on jewels heaped on a table in reckless profusion, on a number of heavy, padlocked chests, on one chest that, its cover tilted back, showed ruddy gold—the Maharajah's treasure chamber, no doubt of it! And again, as not so long earlier when he had first seen the grand palace, Mehmet's nostrils quivered and his fingers twitched.

Loot—by the Prophet! And could he, the hill-bred, pass by without helping himself?

He could not. Did not.

He picked up an emerald thumb ring, a ruby necklace, a gem-studded bracelet, and plopped them into his pocket. Now he almost resented Nurmahal's touch on his shoulder, her appeal to hurry on, since life was more precious than gold. What did she care about these jewels? Only this afternoon—she told him—the Maharajah had shown them to her, had said:

"They will be yours—tomorrow—on your wedding day!"

But Mehmet would not listen. Greed it was. Harsh Afghan greed which nearly cost him his life. For he wasted minutes choosing baubles, gloating over them, trying to open one of the padlocked chests—was startled, all at once, by Nurmahal's sibilant warning:

"Listen!"

At the same moment, a cry boomed down the long, vaulted corridor:

"Hai!"

Came more cries, echoing, high-pitched; a confused babel of voices, muttering faintly but distinctly that the murderer must be in the palace—that he had left the mark of his hands on the door-jamb, his footprints in the dust of the corridor. And other footprints, smaller, were alongside—surely those of an accomplice. . . . .

"Ah—kill them! Kill them both!"

Then silence. Silence before the storm, like a huge intake of breath, a brutish gathering of forces, soon to be released—followed by a single voice, an imperious command:

"Find them! A thousand pieces of gold to him who—"

"The Maharajah!" whispered Nurmahal, even as the man's words were drowned in a cataract of sounds—people running, coming nearer, nearer—feet hurrying, scurrying.

A bestial uproar of yells!

The man-hunt in full cry!

MEHMET looked left, looked right. Where were they to turn? Where were they to find safety? His thoughts gyrated madly, like swirling gray fog in the brain of a blind world. There was a noise in his temples like rushing water—and he knew "' at it was fear, and he was ashamed, and he remembered his old slogan:

"Brazen does it!"

Again, rapidly, he looked. There was no furniture except the padlocked boxes and the table. It was covered by a cloth that reached to the floor, and the space beneath might give precarious shelter to one, not two.

He turned to Nurmahal.

"Quick!" he whispered, pointing.

"But you—what will you do?"

"I shall hunt with the hounds instead of running with the hare!"

And just then, while Nurmahal ducked out of sight, a rabble of men broke into the room with a mad, massed shock and impetus, some brandishing weapons, others torches, and all

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far too excited to notice that, from a shadowy corner, a red-bearded Afghan stepped out and joined them, taking the lead, away from the table toward the farther door, yelling with the best of them:

"Kill! Kill!"

So they ran, ran, pouring through the palace like a relentless flood—searching everywhere except the sacred premises of the harem; unaware that, presently, Mehmet dropped discreetly behind, watching the last of the mob dash away. A strange figure this last, half terrible, half ludicrous: a squat, bearded, paunchy Punjaubi, his stout arms and legs jerking left and right, his robe torn off him in the hectic press, so that he ran there as naked as on the day he was born but for his huge turban of yellow silk.

Mehmet laughed.

Ai, he liked life. Liked the fantastic, romantic, extravagant twists of it; the queer adventures that came to him unasked; the risks and dangers to put steel into a bonny man's soul. Liked the love of it—Allah—a small, black-haired girl's love. . . . . And it flashed through his mind that jewels he had, clanking in his pocket, yet that Nurmahal's gray eyes were the dearest jewels in the world; that many a one he had kissed, yet none lovelier than she in the white moon or in the full, blue day—and he hurried back to the treasure chamber and said to her:

"We must go the way we came—back to the roof—and down into the lane. The hounds are off on a false scent. Our path is clear."

"They will have left watchers behind."

"I doubt it. They are too eager to earn the Maharajah's price—*wah,* his price on this handsome head of mine!—too sure that the culprits passed through the palace."

SHE smiled, a trifle wistfully. This stranger, she thought, who had come to her out of the nowhere, in her hour of need—she loved him, because of his strength, his reckless, hardy bravado. And a girl of thinner sentiment would have marred the moment by pointing out difficulties; a girl of thinner courage would have given way to fear. But not she. Neither now, nor afterwards.

They sped along the corridor and reached the roof. Mehmet was right. It was deserted. So was the lane. Only—and with this he had not reckoned—by this time the news of Rustum Bek's death and the Maharajah's princely offer of reward had spread over Delhi; and—while already morning was flushing up on the horizon, quickly, as it does in the tropics—the streets beyond the lane were leaping into life.

Fragments of life, first. Single. Isolated. Grim silhouettes. An Afridi sharpening his broad dagger. A Bikaneer desertman loping to the reek of blood and gold as a jackal lopes to the reek of carrion. A silk-clad, perfumed Persian dandy, startled by the news from his couch, eager to learn the thrill of the man-hunt.

The fragments of life grew. A dozen people. Fifty. A hundred. They ran together. They balled themselves into a confused, gray pattern, topped by the bright flashes of weapons. They rushed toward the main entrance of the palace. Ever more came.

Voices down there—excited, guttural, screechy.

Hands raised down there. Hands raised in threats. Hundreds of hands against his own two hands, Mehmet told himself—told himself, suddenly, rather morosely, that all was over; felt Islam's supine spell of resignation to the inevitable close about him like a sodden, stifling cloak.

Nurmahal, crouching by his side behind the balustrade, must have read his mind.

"Mektoob," she said, "it is so written!"

She spoke fearlessly, as if stating a mere chilly, almost impersonal fact; and, typically, it was her agreeing with him which roused Mehmet's stubborn Afghan unwillingness to give in, whatever the odds.

"Written—by whom?" he demanded aggressively.

"By fate."

"A rotten fig for fate! Before this have I defied fate and forced her to dance to my piping!" He was silent, thinking; then he asked: "You have your own room in the harem?"

"Yes."

"And do you imagine the people there have discovered your absence by this time?"

"I doubt it. Else the Maharajah, when he offered a reward for the capture of the murderers, would have offered a reward for my capture, too. Only Rustum Bek knew. He happened to come upon me—"

"And died. Therefore, return to the harem!"

"Eh?"

"You will find safety there. Go quick. You still have time. Use the other door—the one of which you spoke—around the corner of the roof."

"And leave you to face the thousand, thousand swords?"

"There will be no question of thousand, thousand swords," he laughed, "—only of a thousand, thousand legs. I shall do what I did before. I shall hunt with the hounds instead of running with the hare." He pointed at the mob, coiling and moiling down the streets. "I shall join them."

"So shall I."

"Impossible. A woman—*one* woman—amongst all these men? They would suspect. Go back to the harem, heart of my heart!"

She shook her head.

"No!"

"You must go!"

Again she shook her head. She told him that, if she returned, there would be her wedding tomorrow, to the Maharajah. Ah—she demanded, almost angrily—did he then love her so little that he could bear the thought of the Maharajah's lips on hers, the Maharajah's head on her pillow? And when he swore by the Book Revealed that this same thought was worse than death to him, that he loved her with all his passion and tenderness, she replied that even thus she loved him. She would rather die with him than live without him. Nor would she be cold or lonely down there in the clods, with him, Mehmet the Red, by her side.

There was no budging her.

"Mektoob," she repeated, "it is so written, O best beloved!"

She was silent. So was he.

They sat there, behind the balustrade, waiting for death to find them. Quietly they sat, while morning rose gradually with lemon lights, and the houses and trees were beginning to throw short, wavery shadows—shadows that seemed to assume the aspect of some ominous and challenging menace—and, presently, in answer to his question, she told him how she had escaped from the harem.

ON the evening before, the Maharajah had come to her, had asked her to prepare for the wedding. She had pleaded with him, telling him she did not love him nor ever could. He had replied that she would learn to love him. Other women had, in the past. Why not she? Perhaps she objected to his other wives? *Wah*—to please her he would divorce them. *Wah, wah*—callously, carelessly, and perhaps he had meant it, perhaps not—he would, if it amused her, have them removed for good, with the help of the executioner's crimson, swishing blade— And, at this moment, Surya, his first wife, had burst into the room.

She was a Tartar gipsy, beautiful, but lawless and untamed, in spite of soft, silken years spent in the harem. She, it appeared, was the only human being of whom the

Maharajah stood in awe. For a sound reason: her tribesmen were famous, or infamous, throughout Asia because of their ancient craft and skill as poisoners.

"Ah," she had exclaimed, "you will have me killed, my lord? And suppose you do? Even then—*hayah*—be pleased to remember that the fleetest horse cannot escape its own tail! Be pleased to remember that there are still my clansmen, clever with certain herbs and juices! My lord, within a week after my death—not a day later—you will be a corpse."

He had paled, had lamely rejoined:

"I was only jesting!"

"I was not!"

"Why," had come his weak cajoling, "you—you would not hurt me, O rejoicer!"

"I would sell your head as a butcher sells flesh!"

He had lost his temper.

"Allah!" he had cried. "Spawn of most objectionable ancestry! Yellow gipsy rat!"

"But a rat," Surya had laughed, "whose bite is death!"

AND there had been such a quarrel, such a storm of mutual accusations and recriminations, such frantic appeals by both husband and wife to Allah, the Prophet Mohammed, and a variety of Moslem saints, that the turmoil had echoed and reverberated through the palace from turret to cellar, causing the servants to finger their blue rosary beads as protection against evil, the sentinels to leave their posts and run here and there to find out what was the matter. At the height of the domestic tiff—with the Maharajah raising his hairy fists to strike the woman who, crouching like a tigress, was toying with a small, poison-smeared dagger up her sleeve—a eunuch had rushed in, had thrown himself at his master's feet and clasped his knees with both arms, imploring him to control himself, while a slave girl, rushing in from the other side, had performed a similar service for Surya.

Four voices now instead of two. Cajoleries. Prayers. Flatteries. The Maharajah taking out his rage against his wife by severely kicking the eunuch; the gipsy taking out her rage against her husband by severely cuffing the slave girl.

More noise—more frantic appeals to Allah—more people coming in, arguing, yelling, gesticulating. . . . . And Nurmahal had used the opportunity to slip from the room; had hurried away, at random, up a corridor, to the right. The last thing she had heard had been the Maharajah's heart-felt declaration that he was through with women for all time, since decent, patient wives were as rare as wings upon a cat and horns upon a hare; and Surya's equally sincere announcement that a pig—even a pig with the glorious title of Maharajah of Karabad and captain-general of the Grand Moghul's armies—did not blush for his face, that therefore, personally, to avoid the loathsome sight of this same pig, she was going out to the bazaars, to shop.

Thus, with the tumult behind her dying away, Nurmahal had reached a door; had not known where it led to; had found it temporarily unguarded, the sentinel having joined the others; had opened it, come out on the roof facing the lane, and called out to a passing, red-bearded Afghan:

"Please—oh, please!"

MEHMET laughed. He laughed at the tale. He laughed, exultingly, at the plan which, suddenly, the tale inspired in him. For—as he told Nurmahal—he had changed his mind. He would make a bid for life, instead of waiting, supine and inert, for death—and morning was close at hand, with the young sun beginning to race along the rim of the world in a sea of fire, and soon, doubtless, the harem would be wide awake. They must hurry.

So he turned to the girl with breathless questions to which she replied with wonder in her tones.

Surya's apartment—she said—was near her own, and both not far from the door that led to the roof. There was an armed guard at this door. None inside the harem, properly speaking, though there were, of course, the eunuchs. Their quarter was at the main entrance of the palace. Nobody could cross the threshold of the main entrance without the Maharajah's permission—or Surya's. The latter, being the chief wife, had considerable freedom allowed her; in fact, ruled the harem with an iron hand; could leave the palace whenever she wished and did so often, almost every day, to go to the bazaars or to visit relatives.

"Good!" said Mehmet. "We must go."

"Go—"

"To find Surya. I shall tell her."

"What?"

"The truth. I shall ask her for help."

"But she hates me—is jealous of me."

"That is why she will help—to get you out of the palace—out of the Maharajah's life!"

He gave her rapid instructions. She inclined her head. She pulled the veil over her face. They rose, turned the corner of the roof, and reached the harem door.

She knocked, while he stepped to one side so that the outward swing of the door would hide him when it opened—as it did, shortly afterward, a Tartar stepping out, halberd in hand. He was astonished, suspicious. With weapon outstretched, he barred her way. Who was she—he demanded—and what did she want?

She told him that she was a palace servant. Where had she been? Ah,—stammering, embarrassed,—she had met her lover. "Please," she whispered, "let me in, or I shall eat whip!" And above the top seam of her veil, her eyelids flickered at the Tartar with the faintest wink in the world.

A gallant man, this Tartar. An amorous man.

"Such a little fool you are," he exclaimed, "to seek beyond these walls what you can find inside!"

"Namely—"

"The pride of Delhi's rollicking lads! Myself!"

And there were this brave warrior's arms about her waist, his halberd clattering on the ground, a rather fatuous smile curling his leathery features—a smile that changed, at once, to a grimace of pained amazement as, from the back, a heavy sword hilt crashed on his neck and knocked him unconscious. A few moments later, Mehmet had him tied and gagged securely with the help of turban and waistshawl; dragged him by the feet toward the balustrade; then hastened back to the girl.

They crossed the threshold and sped down the corridor. It was empty. Yet, with morning so near, noises drifted here and there from behind closed doors. Noises of waking day: people getting out of bed—people yawning—the swish of water—the rustle of garments shed or donned—the patter of bare feet—soft, gliding words—occasionally words more distinct, swapping palace gossip:

"They caught the murderers?"

"No—though they ransacked the house from garret to cellar."

"*Hayah*—the Maharajah will be furious."

"He will be less furious a few hours from now."

"Why?"

"His wedding—have you forgotten?"

"Oh, yes—to Nurmahal. And so young she—and he so old!"

"And what of that? Even the blind cat still hankers after mice."

There were two doors facing each other. Nurmahal pointed.

"My own apartment," she whispered, "and—over there—Surya's."

"Wait in your room, child!"

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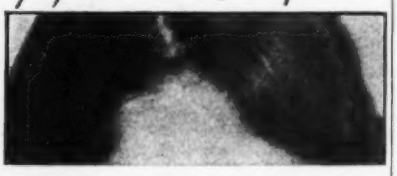

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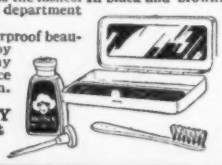

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SHE went inside, while, unceremoniously, Mehmet opened the other door; was confronted, in a circular, outer lobby, by a brown-skinned slave girl. She saw the bold stranger. She was about to cry out; but was frozen into immobility as a sword point tickled her throat—as she heard purring, minatory advice:

"Walls have ears—and so have little soft, downy things! Little soft, downy things that will have these same ears cut off if they make a noise! Show the way to your mistress' room, my darling!"

The steel pricking her skin, what could she do but obey? She preceded him to the inner chamber.

There, on a couch heaped with green, silken cushions, the gipsy reclined, glistening like a tiger beetle in a nest of fresh leaves. Lovely she was, her saffron-yellow robe giving a generous glimpse of supple waist and full, pointed breasts. She was playing with a small, brown monkey held by a jeweled chain. A string of square-cut emeralds encircled the little beast's scrawny neck; great rubies dropped from its tiny, hairy ears.

Surya looked up. She saw Mehmet, tall, broad, hook-nosed, naked sword in hand, and she recognized him—ah, the stranger, the arrogant stranger who had stared at her on the evening before, had spoken such bold words to her. And to Mehmet, too, came recognition—the princess in Islam, there was no doubt of it!

If she was frightened, she did not show it.

"You wish—what?" she demanded.

He stared at her. Allah—he thought—what a woman—what a rare, golden, shimmering treasure among women! And, at this moment, he gave up his plan. Tell her the truth? Tell one woman—a beautiful, eager, vibrant woman—that he loved another?

Impossible—and not at all gallant!

THERE was a different way—he considered—more pleasant and, belike, more in keeping with the sort of man he was. For—nor should we blame him for being what Allah had made him—he was an Afghan of Afghans . . . . the which is hard to explain with the writing of chilly words to those who do not know the northern hills. Perhaps it might best be expressed by saying that there was always spring in his heart and that spring meant to him always the riddle of new lips to kiss; that, were he at the grave's edge and the time come for him to take the long road, the cold road, the last road, the road to death, there would be still in him the strong craving for one more year—aye!—one more hour of life and love—for one more woman to hold in his arms.

So, when Surya repeated, "You wish—what?", he said, "Yourself, O princess in Islam!" And he told her, weaving lies so that they sounded like truth, how, seeing her yesterday had been to him like sudden sight to the blind eyes of darkness. And thus he had risked dangers innumerable, had risked his very neck, to enter the palace, to come to her—to tell her that.

"Pah!" she interrupted. "Before this day is two hours older, the gallows-tree will welcome you—and the vultures and crows!"

A hard threat.

But he noticed that, though a gong was at her elbow, she did not strike it; and he replied:

"Gallows-tree or not—you might ask me my name."

"Why should I?"

"Is it not proper that a woman should know the name of the man who, presently, will be her lover?"

And unhurriedly, he walked over to her. He bent. He pressed his lips on hers. Her fingers crisped, curled—to scratch and claw him with her sharp nails. But he kissed her again—a long, long kiss . . . . and her fingers relaxed; her eyes softened, darkened . . . .

"Ah—" she sighed—"you seem an old hand, a shrewd hand, at this business of love!"

He smiled.

"Would you have me else? Would you have me a beardless, stammering youth, afraid of his own passion?"

Once more he kissed her, and she whispered:

"Are you not forgetting that I am a princess in Islam—while you are—"

"What I am! Mehmet the Red,—neither more nor less,—Mehmet the Bold, at your service!"

"Mehmet the Dead," she warned him, "unless you hasten away from here!"

And she pointed to the window whence, from a near-by mosque, drifted a muezzin's call to morning prayer:

"Yah abeyd Ullah—la illah ill' Ullah—wahed Ullah."

He rose.

"I may come again," he asked, "soon, soon?"

"Soon, soon!" she echoed.

"And yet, how can I come again—how can I leave—with the palace already awake, with armed guards, servants, eunuchs surely prowling about—ready to cut my throat?"

"Here!" From her thumb she slipped a ring of soft gold, set with sapphires and carved with the Maharajah's initials. She gave it to him. "An Open Sesame, O strong man! Come back to me—soon, soon!"

"Soon, soon!"

HE left her. He returned to Nurmahal. And seeing her—was it not like him?—he thought no more, just then, of Surya's red lips; said to himself that here was a girl dearer to him than the dwelling of kings.

Together they went to the front entrance. There a pot-bellied captain of horse, gorgeous in scarlet and gold, stopped them with drawn sword and a thunderous:

"Halt! Who goes there?"

But he sheathed the weapon and salaamed courteously when Mehmet flashed the Maharajah's seal ring. He shrugged his shoulders. Tartar gipsies—he thought—who had paid a visit to Surya, their relative. Allah—it was the way of her—always filling the palace with her thieving, hungry breed. Allah, Allah—if he were in the Maharajah's shoes, he would make short shrift of them all, would kick them back where they belonged, to their black felt tents. But he was not the Maharajah—was only a captain of horse, drawing meager enough pay. So he smiled, salaamed once more as Mehmet touched his palm with the pleasant tinkle of silver rupees, threw open the gate, and said:

"Pass, O children of Adam!"

They stepped out on the street. The sun had risen. It was drawing the sweetness from Delhi's thousand gardens.

"Where are we going?" asked Nurmahal.

"To find ease and happiness and the full heart!"

"And where shall we find all that?"

"In the north—in the free land, the keen land, my own land! In Kabul, the king's town! *Hai,"*—he laughed—"proudly we shall ride into Kabul, past the tall, haughty houses, and the people will open the windows and lean out and envy us as we prance by astride our fine stallions! Ah,"—and he slapped his pocket so that the trinkets, taken from the Maharajah's treasure chamber, clanked loudly,—"for rich we shall be after we have sold these!"

They entered the Bazaar of the Badakshani Merchants. There the sun danced on gold and silver, on brass and copper and precious stones, on silks and rugs and Persian brocades gay with cherry-red and furnace-crimson, with serpent-green and lizard-green, with black and silver as a fervid summer night slashed by lightnings and yellow as delicate as the seedlings of a pea.

"We sell—cheap, cheap!" came the mer-

chants' raucous, greedy chorus. "We buy—high, high!"

"Buy these—then!" said Mehmet.

He tossed the jewels on the counter: a necklace, a bracelet, another bracelet, anklets, nose-studs. He was about to add to the pile the Maharajah's seal ring, the Open Sesame to the harem, to Surya's apartment.

But, quickly, he reconsidered.

"*Wah*," he thought—"some day, belike, I shall return to Delhi."

So, blushing rather guiltily, he kept the ring; finished his haggling; and, an hour later, stirrup to stirrup with Nurmahal, rode out of the city, toward the north, toward his own land.

He laughed gayly. *Hai*—what a day it was, blue and golden. The very day for the open road and, as the Afghan saying has it, for putting the seven moors and the seven plains and the seven hills below a keen lad's feet! The very day to lean from the saddle and kiss a girl's red lips!

And he did just that.

SKY ROCKET

(Continued from page 79)

fast, cheap to operate, dependable—the engine that would "fly a barn door"!

"Chicago to New York," he told her guardedly, "in—well, in about six hours. If I don't have any forced landings. And at low cost! You can imagine what a splash it will make in aircraft circles when the news comes out."

"Six hours! Wow!" Suddenly she apprehended the strain he would be under from now on. "I'm going to run along," she decided impulsively. "Perhaps you'll rest a little before you go."

She gave him a firm, cool hand. "So long, Ted!"

His gaze swept her face with a shy, uncertain longing. She had seen that look before on men's faces, had known what to do about it. . . . . Had pilots a superstition against being wished good luck? She seemed to recall that they had. Well, there were other ways. . . . . Ted was wondering if—

Joan let her lashes droop, her lips curve, with almost imperceptible expectancy, and she scarcely seemed to sway toward him.

But her next responses were involuntary. In the transport of a kiss experienced days before imaginatively her eyes closed, her hands moved in a restive caress across his face, her pulses raced. When she caught her breath a faint "*Oh—*" escaped her lips as she came up out of a vertigo strange in her experience.

"Darling Joan."

OUTSIDE his apartment door she paused, alone for a moment, smiling with curious, troubled tenderness. Shyly she turned and blew a kiss to the man who no longer could see her. Cool Joan with the hard nonchalance, the self she had known, was gone. The old Joan who liked and understood men, who kissed men for the experiment—gone! The emergent Joan was seething, entranced, not very sure of herself.

Of Ted she knew nothing. He had accepted one of her too-free kisses, yes. An impulse, perhaps, a moment's purely physical inclination. What reason on earth to presume that he cared? And she with a terrifying suddenness, cared so terribly. When would she even see him next?

She telephoned him a couple of hours later. "Ted, I've just thought. Don't you want me to keep the Kat for you?"

"That's awfully kind, Joan, but the Kat goes along. Sort of mascot."

They said little else; neither was free to talk. Joan was at a noisy dinner-party; he apparently had pilot friends with him.

On Tuesday, in a desperation wholly new to her temperament, she realized she had to see Lila. She got the address from the telephone book and drove around there in the early afternoon.

What would Lila be like? She tried to bring her intelligence to bear upon the question. Rather lovely, since Ted had loved her—but *had* he, really?—and—cold, or otherwise? Mercenary and vindictive, certainly.

Announced from the foyer and admitted by a Negro maid, Joan found herself in the apartment of a woman whose very *amour propre* depended upon the possession of objects which were in vogue. The place was like a department-store window! Modernist furniture, smart in itself, but senseless in the small drawing-room; small objects like bridge prizes all around. A display of fifty-cent magazines told Lila what to want next.

A bedroom glimpsed beyond was beruffled and roseate, pseudo late Hollywood. The whole place screamed of a mistress dominated by petty material snobberies. Probably Lila felt *déclassée* every time she saw a doodad she did not own, and frenzied if she saw another woman owning it.

THE woman now entering the room was perhaps four years older than Ted himself. And how could he ever have thought her beautiful! The best of men at times seemed to have no taste. Paint was beauty; more paint was more beauty. Lila's eyes were dark, but cold, opaque, beady. Pretty to the casual glance she might be, but her lips, all her features were thin, avid.

Her glance rested first on Joan's costume, with complacency, then with faint misgivings. (That raffish hat. Expensive. *Was* it the smart thing?) Lila herself wore an afternoon frock, heavily appliqué, lace embroidered. Her novelty jewelry clanked. What a creature!

"I'm Joan Powers. My brother is a friend of Ted North's and I've met him lately."

"He sent you to me?" asked Lila's contralto.

"Lord, no! It really isn't likely, is it? I came on my own. Do you mind talking about him for a few minutes?"

"What is it you'd like to know?"

"Well—" Joan plunged. "Is it absolutely final that you wont free him? His friends think he might be happy if he had another chance—with some one else. You see, he admires women tremendously—he has to conceal it, I admit—and—well, he really ought to have one of his own. He isn't the hermit type, I mean."

LILA'S voice became hard and vibrant, her eyes hard. "I'm not going to free him. I'll prevent him from making another woman as miserable as he made me." That old whiskery piece of cant!

"But that's rather a lot of glue, isn't it, when you come to think it over? It's not up to you, is it, to arrange some unknown woman's life for her? Besides, he could probably make her miserable one way as well as another if he was so determined to."

"Are you in love with him?"

"Well, naturally! I should hardly be here—"

"And he, I take it, is in love with you." Supercilious interest, no blaze of emotion in the small eyes.

"I doubt if he is. Certainly he hasn't said he is. I've known him just a short time. My brother has one of those co-op apartments that you buy, you know; rather a doggy place with a purple glass bath and all that; and Ted's taking it while my brother's away and living there all alone with just a Kat for company."

"I've always wanted one!"

Joan looked up in surprise. "You have!

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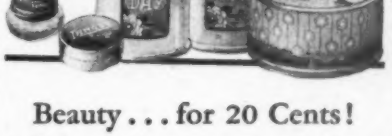

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They're not very hard to get. You can get one like his for nothing."

"A cat? No, I loathe the creatures. A purple bath. Only I would have mine Nile green."

"Coral or rose would be more becoming to you."

"Would it? Yes, you're right." She paused; her eyes seemed to fill with venomous light. Her thin lips curled. "I will give him an absolute divorce if he will give me—I'm so glad you mentioned it!—a coral bath, with a suitable apartment attached. Or shall we leave the color out, and just say twenty thousand dollars."

"I don't know much about his affairs," Joan said quietly, "but I don't imagine he has any such sum as you mention."

"Nor do I. I long ago gave up imagining he ever would have."

"Then can't we be serious? Is there any good in talking in terms of sums he never could pay?"

"Probably not," said Lila. "And certainly there's no good talking of what he could pay. It wouldn't cover the soap."

"Then you were amusing yourself by taking a roundabout way of telling me to go to hell; is that it?"

"Oh, not quite. You wanted to know my position; I've told you. I'm satisfied with things as they are, that's all. If he's not, I don't care. A divorce would be a nuisance. If I gain nothing by it, why bother? There it is."

"I see." Joan rose and picked up her gloves. "It would just be an awfully decent thing to do," she said tonelessly. There was something disturbing about her very young dignity. "But that doesn't count for a thing with you, does it?"

SHE left the house in a mood of deep depression. For the first time in her nineteen years she had met a person who seemed quite depraved. A woman who would stop at nothing to gratify the cheapest tastes, who would go into a fury for the sake of some piece of trash. A woman incapable of a charming intimacy, but firm in a hatred so sullen that the thought of it chilled Joan's blood.

The thought that dismayed her was that Ted must be hard, that life with such a woman must have made him so. Would he even care to have his freedom? Did he want anything but to escape falling into dreams of another woman?

From Lila's she went to a place where there were friends and tea and much gay talk. There were drinks in stemmed glasses, and there were long shadows on the River. But people had become formless personalities. The men had no magnetism; their minds had no bite. And when a reminiscent tug-whistle floated up from the River it gave her an unutterable sense of loss. . . . .

Ted North took off from Chicago in a gray dawn. His weather picture of the route ahead promised storms and fog. Neither the time nor the conditions were of his choosing. Officials of the Sturgiss company wanted his arrival at Roosevelt field to time with the city editions of the papers. That was that. He did what was expected of him, in the military tradition of flyers.

Beacons at La Porte, South Bend, Toledo. Increasing lapses of time when he saw nothing of the earth below. . . . . Intervals of blind flying. . . . .

The Kat was curled up on the flooring under his knees. The Kat-face had sharpened, the pink nose turned pale, the Kat-eyes somber, with apprehension.

"What's the trouble, Kat?" Ted called, gently reproving. "That noise? If you're going to be a scared-Kat, pick the right thing to be scared of. Noise wont hurt a Kat. But if it stops—watch out!"

The Kat, of course, heard none of this. He licked Ted's hand, and that seemed to buck him up.

At Cleveland Ted got his last bearing. East of there he ran into dense cloud formations and had to climb to eight thousand feet to get above them. Bright sunlight here shone on an illimitable prairie of fleecy vapor. Navigation by dead reckoning now. Never a hole in the carpet of cloud. Horizons, vistas, of unspeakable monotony.

The thought of Joan kept recurring; she was never quite out of his mind. He was in love with her, and his new, hard philosophy was crumbling. Saner, perhaps, to say that he was going to be in love with her if he kept on seeing her. But he was going to be anyway, and he was not going to keep on seeing her!

Lila would not free him. He had no illusion about her, not a scrap of belief in her generosity. Knowing about Joan would only make her adamant. Nothing would give her more satisfaction than withholding a concrete happiness.

There was one thing to do: stop seeing Joan while her enchantment was yet lightly upon him. It would be an ordeal; the fever of longing for her was already in his blood. A clean break was the only thing, before she was drawn in, before some tragic attachment developed.

Renunciation seemed to make her image clearer, her loveliness more poignant. Joan with her candor and gallantry and intensely feminine charm! The man who possessed her love would know love in a white-hot, elemental purity.

There must be a way! There was no way. Thoughts, vague waking dreams milled in his brain. Joan—

Time to mush down through the clouds for a bearing. He must be close to the seaboard. He had been making nearly two hundred miles an hour! He touched the Kat, put the nose of his ship down, and slipped into the wet gray dusk.

Blind flying. A man's very instincts deserted him in this lonely world of opaque mist. Sense of balance was a delusion; sense of direction an absurdity. Instruments alone could give him altitude, direction, angle, speed, stability. He might be in a wing-slip or a spin for all his senses could tell him. The earth might be over his shoulder, or crashing down on his head, for all his instincts could say.

DOWN and down, through mile after blind mile. No end to the thickness of the clouds. Had the whole universe dissolved into eerie mist? Was there a country under him there; or sea; or nothing? His nerves were jumping with the long strain of watching bright dials. At sixteen hundred feet he leveled out in bewilderment, half distrusting his altimeter, seeming to feel the proximity of the earth. In cautious descent again, he peered down over the cockpit edge. Nothing!

. . . . Quite suddenly, as by some magic parting of the veils of cloud, he saw the smudge of Bayonne through a dilution of fog and rain. With a grin he opened up. A minute later downtown Manhattan came out like a mirage.

"Well, Kat! That, with luck, is that."

His ship, her engine hidden by a Venturi cowling, was rushed into a hangar as he landed. Officials gripped his hand. Technical men surged about the plane, checked his gauges with mutters of glee, gave him affidavits to sign. Reporters buzzed about. Photographers walked widdershins with their faces stuck in their cameras. A small gaping crowd stood in the rain.

In an hour or less the world would know about the Sturgiss Skyrocket. Orders would pour in against future production. Some day even the man who made the flight, who had put in countless hours of research, would reap a mild prosperity. For the moment a pilot friend was saying: "How about a little drink?"

"I could do with one!"

Just one to let him down, relax his nerves. Wet and shivering, he craved the glow of another, but a madness possessed him to call up Joan. He was afraid to take a second.

AND Joan waited.

All day Wednesday, into the evening, she could persuade herself that official conferences kept him. But when Thursday morning came with no note, and the hours passed without a call from him, she was forced back into her earlier dread.

He would not come. He had taken the Kat with him to avoid another meeting with her! No, he had had enough of women. This was the break.

Friday came, and with it a degree of apathy. She listened for the telephone as on the other days, but without the desperation of willing it, praying it, to ring. Perhaps he would drop in one day now, but not as a lover—merely as an acquaintance, a friend of Jack's.

He came at tea-time, when she had given him up, when her spirits had fallen too low to respond to false hopes. She was alone, and had him shown to the library. Her heart leaped at the sight of him, but her manner was controlled.

"It's nice to see you again so soon," she said—cool Joan, who could kiss and forget! "I read about you in the papers. How are you?"

He took her by the shoulders and studied her face. "No," he told her. "It wont do. Joan!"

His voice and touch tore her restraint to shreds. "Ted—"

He caught her in his arms and kissed her; held her away from himself again to pull a letter from his pocket. "I couldn't have come now but for this, Joan. Read it!"

Joan took the letter—read:

"My dear Ted:

"I've just seen your name in the papers and got to thinking about you and me and our matrimonial flop. As a matter of fact, I'm getting lazy about remembering, and rather bored with hating you. If you want an absolute divorce I'll let you have it. No doubt it's awfully decent of me and I'll have my reward in heaven. Anyway, if you like, we'll set the lawyers on the mess and see what they can do.

"Sincerely,

"Lila."

"Why, Ted! Isn't that great!"

"It doesn't even sound like her," he declared. "I can't understand it. I'd think it was a forgery or something, but I know her writing. Well, there it is."

"Yes, there it is. You can't be cynical in the face of it, can you?"

"No. I suppose she's changed. *Do* people? *I* don't know! Dearest!"

"Please," she begged. "Don't say it till you're quite sure. I love you so, Ted! I don't want you to be rushed."

"Now!" he insisted. . . . .

After he was gone she took two slips of paper from her desk, looked at them pensively, dropped them in the fireplace. One was the buying order, executed at 104; the other was the selling order at the market, 126½-127. One thousand shares on margin of Sturgiss Aero.

When Sturgiss skyrocketed she had taken all but four points of the rally, transferring a brokerage credit of twenty thousand dollars to Lila Merrick.

Ted must never know the truth! Vehemently, Joan told herself: "I couldn't have, any other way! But I didn't do it. He did! He won his own freedom. I did nothing—but translate his own act! I didn't even take risks, because I knew."

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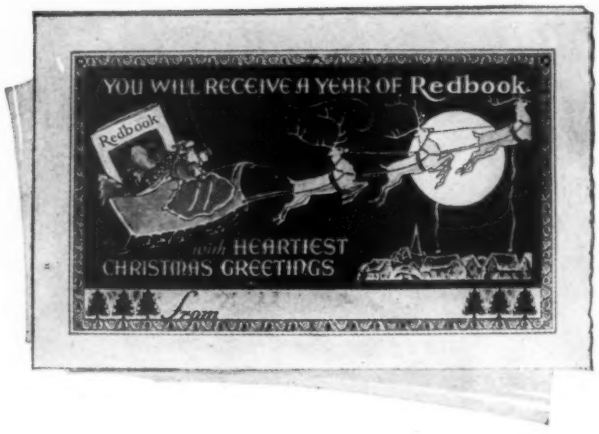

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US AND COMPANY

(Continued from page 67)

between Joe's father and mother. Huh! Tommy knew all about it. He knew the row started because Joe's dad was too hard-boiled with him and Joe's mother was too easy. She always took Joe's part, and Mr. Brent got sore. Joe's dad didn't understand Joe. He thought Joe was awful wild, and you had to get hard-boiled with him to make Joe behave. Joe's mother didn't want Joe's dad to pick on him all the time. They'd had a row, and Mrs. Brent said she was going back on the stage to make her own living, and she went to New York to start.

But they'd made it up. Joe's dad had gone to New York to bring Joe's mother home. They'd be back in the morning. Tommy thought Joe's folks had acted like grammar-school kids. He wanted to tell his parents all about it. He wanted to express his opinions. He wanted to explain how much more serious Joe's being in love with Jean Hobart was than they thought.

He looked at his father and then at his mother. Mr. Loomis had returned to his newspaper. Mrs. Loomis had resumed her story in the magazine.

"But don't you see that if—" he began. He didn't finish. What was the use?

"Yes, dear?" said his mother absently, as she turned a page.

"Aw, nothing," said Tommy.

Desolate, he went upstairs to his own room. It was in great disorder. Joe had dressed there for his date. Absently Tommy started to straighten up by kicking all the clothes on the floor under the bed, and tossing things on the bed into a closet. Joe had taken his new red-and-green-and-pink-striped tie, and his clocked socks with the polka-dot garters to match. But he was at that moment wearing Joe's agate cuff-links and varsity watch-chain adorned with Joe's golden football. (Tommy had, in a moonlit impulse, allowed Wilma to have his varsity chain.) He liked to swap clothes with Joe. He liked the sharing of so many things with Joe.

Mute testimonies to their friendship filled the room: The blue and red ribbons he and Joe had won in the interscholastic track meet three weeks ago. They had run one-two in the two hundred and twenty low hurdles. It was Tommy's first blue ribbon; he suspected that Joe had broken stride purposely to let him hit the tape ahead of the field. Joe had known how much he wanted to win that race. Their football sweaters, their tennis racquets, their Junior R.O.T.C. swords. Joe's moth-eaten swimming suit, the one he was wearing that day at the river when Tommy hit his head on a rock, diving. Joe had fished Tommy out; Tommy remembered the feel of Joe's strong arms in that terrible moment. Good old Joe!

Now, Joe was out at some town dance with Jean Hobart. Tomorrow his folks would be home. If they heard about Joe's crush on Jean, there'd be another row. Maybe Joe's folks would bust up for good this time. Maybe Joe's dad would refuse to let him go to college next year. What would college be without Joe? And the big game Saturday!

Tommy opened a book and tried to study, but he couldn't follow the lines.

IT was after midnight when Joe came in.

Tommy was sprawled on the bed, wide awake. He looked at Joe searchingly. Joe's blond face was flushed. His hair was rumpled. Tommy caught the faint odor of cheap perfume. It was the kind Jean used. Had Joe been necking? Naw, Joe wouldn't neck. It was Joe's first case. You didn't neck the first case. You just sat and looked at her. But you did like to steal one of her handkerchiefs. That was how Joe had got Jean's perfume.

"You awake?" said Joe unnecessarily, starting to undress.

"What do *you* think?"

"Wise-head."

"How was the dance?"

"Okay."

"Going to meet your folks in the morning?"

"Guess so."

"I'm sure glad they made up."

"So'm I."

Tommy raised himself on an elbow.

"You gonna tell 'em about Jean?"

Joe tugged viciously at a shoe-lace.

"Naw."

"They'll find out, wont they?"

"What if they do?"

"Nothing, except—well, you know how your dad is."

JOE stared at the wall. "He'll raise hell, I guess."

"That's what I'm afraid of, Joe. Heck, your folks'll start another row. Can't you sort of stop going with Jean for a while?"

"No."

"Why not? She wont get sore. Honest, she wont."

"You know better'n that, Tommy."

"I don't see why you have to worry so much about hurting her feelings. I hurt Wilma's feelings lots of times. It's good for women."

Joe looked hard at Tommy. "You don't want me to go with Jean, do you?"

Tommy's eyes wavered. "We-ell—heck, Joe, we got this game on day after tomorrow, and—"

"Don't kid me. Nobody wants me to go with Jean. They're all against her."

"Jean's a good little kid, but—"

Tommy had never seen Joe look as he did now. Words seemed boiling in Joe's throat.

"Listen—you're my buddy; I'll tell you something: I love that girl—and if everybody keeps trying to bust us up, I'll marry her—right away."

"M-marry her?"

"Yes. Marry her."

Marry? The word had an outlandish sound to Tommy.

"Why, Joe," he blurted, "you're nothing but a kid. What you talking about marrying anybody for?" He laughed, trying to dismiss the sound of the word. "That's good! Kids like you and Jean talking about getting *married*."

"You heard me," said Joe.

Tommy jumped out of bed—ran around and grabbed Joe's arms, shook him.

"Why, Joe, that's *crazy!* Don't you see how crazy that is? You're only eighteen years old. You can't get married. Sa-ay—are you just trying to—kid me?"

Joe shook him off.

"Don't try to talk me out of it," he said savagely. "Are you my buddy, or not?"

"Of course I'm your buddy!"

"Well, listen, then: Jean's never had a break; everybody's against her but me—and that Greek's is no place for a girl like Jean. She's working too hard—she's a darn' delicate little kid. I've got to get her away from that life!"

Tommy knew just what was eating on Joe.

"That's crazy, Joe. Just *crazy*. Don't you remember the crush I had on that little Ryan girl that worked in Dad's office last summer? I thought just the same thing about her. I was gonna tell Dad the work was killing that kid. Then I found out she was twenty-two years old and engaged to an insurance guy, and—"

Joe's eyes were ominous.

"Wait a minute. You're not claiming that Jean's anything like that Ryan girl, are you?"

Tommy was arguing desperately now.

"I'm not claiming anything except you're so goofy over Jean you've gone nuts. Even if you were crazy enough to want to marry Jean, she wouldn't marry you. *She's* got sense!"

"Shut up!" said Joe. "I'll be getting sore in a minute."

"But Joe—"

"You heard me."

He turned out the light and flung himself on his side of the bed. Tommy stood in the darkness, tears of exasperation smarting in his eyes.

Suppose Joe's dad found out how crazy he was about Jean? There'd be a terrible row. Tommy knew Joe's dad. The darned old fool would disown Joe or something, and order him to stay away from Jean. And Joe would try to run away with Jean just out of stubbornness. And Jean might get her back up and run away with Joe just to spite Joe's folks. Jean was that sort. That was what happened last year when Davey Haas eloped with Maud Dunckle. There was an awful mess and Maud's folks had to have the marriage annulled.

"Joe?"

No answer.

"Good night, Joe."

No answer.

Tommy got into bed. He lay very straight on the far edge of his side. He stared into the darkness. When a man's eighteen, he's got to face life—even if nobody gives him any credit for it.

NEXT day, shortly before the noon recess, Tommy entered the Sugar Bowl. He made at once for his favorite booth in the corner. Miss Jean Hobart hastened to give service.

"Hullo, Tommy. You still sore?"

"Me? Sore?"

"You was yesterday something fierce."

"I couldn't stay sore at a sweet little girl like you."

"Gee, you're awful sarcastic, Tommy."

"That's not sarcasm. I mean it."

"Aw—yeah—I'll bet!"

"You know why I was sore, don't you?"

"Because I wouldn't promise to quit going with Joe."

Tommy sighed, heavily.

"That's not the real reason. I was jealous."

The purple eyes lighted, but the droopy lids lowered a curtain on the drama starting in their depths.

"Yeah. I'll bet. You're just kidding me."

"I was kidding you yesterday. I guess I didn't want you to know the real reason why I didn't want you to go with Joe."

"Honest, Tommy? No fooling?"

"No fooling, Jean. I'm stuck on you."

She looked at him distrustfully.

"You're just trying to make a sap outa me. I should fall for *that* line!"

"Aw, let's forget it, Jean. I guess there's no chance for me, anyway. You like Joe too much."

He ordered a chocolate ice-cream soda. She made no move to get it.

"Joe's an awful nice boy and all that, Tommy. I could get him to ast me would I marry him, if I wanted to."

"Sure. You stick to Joe."

"But Joe's kinda slow, at that. All the time just sitting and hardly saying a thing."

"You like 'em slow. I'd move around too fast for you, anyway."

"Sa-ay, I got plenty of pep. An old slow-poke like Wilma Johnson's your kind."

Tommy gulped.

"Wilma and I have busted up," he said.

"Honest? Then, you aint got a girl to go with?"

"Naw."

A pause; then: "I'll go with you, Tommy."

"You stick to Joe. I got too much speed for high-school kids, anyway. When I neck 'em, they wish they were giraffes."

She was his. "I'll quit Joe and go with you, if you want me to, Tommy."

"When?"

"Well, I got a date for the dance with Joe, but after—I'll tell him tonight."

Tommy snorted.

"That's not the peppy way to bust a date. I promised to take Wilma to the dance tonight. I'm not gonna tell her or nothing. I'm just not gonna show up."

She giggled.

"That's awful dirty. I bet she'll be sore."

"You do the same with Joe, and I'll take you to the dance."

"But Joe would be awful sore—"

"Yeah—uh—I guess he will."

"I thought you and him was buddies."

"Not any more," said Tommy.

HE was dancing with Jean. It was worse than he had expected. Everybody in the big gymnasium seemed to be looking at them. Jean didn't dance the way high-school girls danced. She put her head up close to your face and "ragged" with her shoulders. She made remarks in a loud voice and giggled.

Through the crowd he saw Wilma dancing with Bulger Hewitt. Wilma hadn't said anything when she saw him come in with Jean. The broken date had been enough for Wilma. Now, Wilma wouldn't look in his direction. She talked animatedly with Bulger. Wilma knew Tommy didn't like Bulger.

"They don't dance here like they do at the Crystal," Jean was saying in his ear. "Gosh, they're slow. Who's that dumb thing in the green dress, Tommy?" He grunted something and tried to avoid the questioning glances of members of the Dance Committee.

Where was Joe? Why hadn't Joe shown up? He'd had plenty of time to go by Jean's house and discover the broken date. Would Joe come to the dance? Joe hadn't shown up to play with the orchestra at the start of the evening. Tommy had led them without Joe to carry the time. A bunch of professionals were playing for the dance. Tommy was sorry. If the school orchestra had played he'd have an excuse to get away from Jean.

The music stopped. Tommy didn't wait for the encore. He led Jean off the floor under pretext that he was thirsty. His ears burned from the buzz of talk around him. He knew what they were saying.

Jiggers Kane, president of the Dance Committee, pulled him aside.

"Where's Joe?" Jiggers demanded. "Why did you let him talk you into crashing this dance with Jean Hobart?"

"I brought Jean on my own, Jiggers," he said. "Joe didn't have anything to do with it."

He left Jiggers gasping, and hurried back to Jean. No other fellows would dance with her, and he had to keep her satisfied.

"This is a dumb bunch," Jean complained. "Let's go down to the Crystal, Tommy."

"We'll leave after one more dance," he said.

The music started.

"Get hot, Tommy," Jean shrilled. "I feel this one in my toes!"

Tommy was just about to swing her into the dance when he saw Joe—standing in the vestibule of the main entrance. The sight of Joe hurt like a knife in his chest.

"What's the matter, Tommy?" said Jean, missing step as Tommy halted.

Then she saw Joe.

"There's Joe," she said. "C'mon. Let's dance to the middle. He'll be sore."

But Tommy wasn't going to run away.

Joe came stumbling toward him. He looked dazed, stricken. Tommy heard Jean saying nervously: "Tommy brought me, Joe. I've decided I'd rather go with Tommy after this."

Why didn't Joe say something? Why didn't Joe take a swing at him or cuss him out or something?

When Joe spoke, it was to Jean. He ignored Tommy elaborately.

"I didn't know you were going with Loomis," said Joe, thickly, painfully.

Tommy heard Jean giggle.

"Tommy and I had a crush on each other for weeks, only we didn't have sense enough to know it. Aint that funny?"

He saw the blood dye Joe's neck and spread up to his hair.

"Yeah," said Joe, "that's funny. I thought Loomis was a friend of mine. That's funny too."

Joe turned and walked off the dance-floor.

"Well—*that's* over, Tommy," said Jean gayly. "Let's dance."

He danced, stumblingly. . . . .

Hours later, it seemed to him, he was leaving the gym with Jean. At the door Prof. Hibbs, the coach, halted him.

"What's the trouble between you and Joe, Tommy?"

"I guess we've had a scrap, Prof."

The coach frowned. "That leaves us in fine shape for the game tomorrow, doesn't it?"

"I'll catch Joe, anyway."

"Well—Joe's asked for another catcher, Tommy. I told him I couldn't let personal quarrels interfere with the team. Can't you boys make this up?"

"No. Joe's sore at me. But that's all right, Prof. Bulger Hewitt can catch Joe tomorrow."

"I've told Joe he'd have to pitch to *you*."

"I don't want to catch if that's the way Joe feels. We'd both play rotten, anyway."

"Well—perhaps you're right," said the coach stiffly. "But it's rather hard on the rest of the boys, isn't it?"

"Yes—I guess it is. I'm sorry."

Prof. Hibbs turned away disgustedly. . . . .

Tommy walked down the steps and joined Jean. She had picked out Joe and Tommy's flivver from the line at the curb.

"Joe's left us the car, Tommy," she said. "Come on. Let's ride out to the Park. I know a place where we can stop with the lights out, Tommy."

The boy stared at the flivver. He saw the words, *"Owned by Us and Co.,"* on the door.

"Let's walk," he said. "We'll go to your house."

At her house she ran to a porch swing. He followed her without alacrity—sat down. He was thinking of the game tomorrow, and Joe. That game was to have been the final triumph of Us and Company.

"What's the matter, Tommy?"

"Aw—nothing."

She moved closer.

"I'm glad we decided to be boy friend and girl friend, aren't you, Tommy?"

"Huh? Oh, sure."

"Well? You gonna make me wish I had a neck like a giraffe, Tommy?"

She lifted her face invitingly. The gesture was too practiced. Tommy liked to steal his kisses. He'd only kissed Wilma once, and she'd slapped him, hard. Tommy judged girls by how hard they slapped. But this girl—

"I don't feel like necking tonight," he said.

Miss Hobart giggled.

"You're just bashful, boy friend," she said. And reached for him. He shoved her away and jumped up.

"I'm going home," he said. "So long."

"Sa-ay—I like that! That's a swell way to act after I quit Joe to go with you. You come here—"

Tommy turned on her.

"I'd just as soon," he said in a level voice, "I'd just as soon kiss a horse!"

Then he walked down the steps and across the yard, while she stared after him.

TOMMY sat in front of the bleachers with the band. The band only knew three selections; it had played each twice and was

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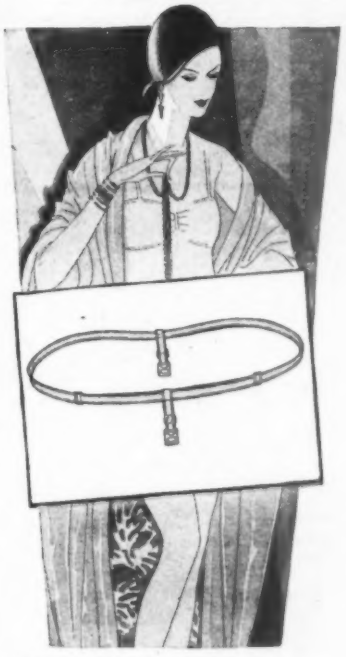

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enjoying a well-earned rest-period. The South High section was cheering its team, which at the moment was indulging in some snappy infield practice. The North High stands were silent. Its team had not yet appeared on the diamond.

To Tommy, life looked pretty darn' tragic. He looked at his reflection in the cymbals on his big bass drum and was surprised to see that his hair was still a curly dark brown. By rights it should have turned white overnight, or at least got iron-grayish at the temples. The chattering and cheering about him was pretty darn' ironic. When a man is eighteen, and he's faced life, the babbling of high-school kids sounds kind of silly.

Why didn't the team come out?

PETE GARBISCH, who was drum major of the band—Tommy had the job sewed up for Joe, but Joe wouldn't wear the uniform—walked over to Tommy.

"Time to give 'em 'Dear North High' again, Tommy?"

"Naw. Wait till the team comes out."

Suddenly a couple of freshmen came galloping over to the bandstand.

"Hey—Tommy! Joe Brent wants to see you. He's been hunting all over for you."

Tommy jumped up. "Where is he?"

"In the dressing-room. Prof Hibbs says for you to hurry."

Joe had gone home with somebody else last night. What did this mean? Did Joe want to give him a licking? Or had Joe decided to—

He met Joe near the gym field door. Joe was grinning sheepishly. He wore his baseball uniform.

"Why the hell aren't you dressed, Tommy?" said Joe.

"B-but—I—I thought you were sore at me."

Joe kicked his spikes into the cinders.

"Aw," he said, "Jean tried to make up with me this morning. She said you just pretended you were stuck on her."

"That's right, Joe. Honest it is." Then all his feeling for Joe swept stern resolves away. "I don't care what you do with Jean Hobart. You can marry her if you want to, Joe!"

Joe hung his head.

"Aw, I'm off of that hooey for life. I see through that girl now. She's—she's no good, Tommy."

Tommy reached out and jerked Joe's cap over his eyes.

"Yuh big bum," he said, "I knew you'd get some sense!"

Joe whaled Tommy in the stomach with his fist, but it didn't hurt—it didn't hurt at all.

"Get the hell into a uniform, Tommy," he said brusquely. "We got to win a ball game this aft!"

TOMMY crouched behind the plate. He peered through his mask at Joe. "Steady, big boy," he barked, "right down the old groove, now! Right across the old pan. Ha! Here it comes—here it comes—you can't hit it!"

"Strike three! Ye're out!" yelled the umpire.

Two gone, now. Here comes the third man.

"We got this one too, Joe. Atta boy! The big smoke, Joe, the big smoke!"

Last of the ninth and two gone, with North High three runs to nothing! Tommy spat masterfully through his mask as Joe's fast one burned across the plate and stung through leather and padding.

Everything was all right now. Yep. A sense of clean, sweet wholesomeness, a sense of peace, came to Tommy. It very nearly came too soon.

Tommy almost dropped the third strike!

SHOW-DOWN

(Continued from page 41)

I gasped. "It's going to be some party! Did you hear the order Dad left for the Hip Control Office? Twenty-four cases of champagne, and heavens only knows how much hard stuff! And Mark Moody's Jazz orchestra out for the dance Sunday night!" I added. "Not to mention the new little roulette-wheel that came this morning. I caught Wilkins unpacking it, and I'll bet they don't expect to play for sugar-cookies!"

"Huh!" said my brother. "You know the parents—they can't stick bridge under a quarter a point, and I hear old man Marger gambles so high he had Monte Carlo asking for mercy last season!"

"That's bad enough," I admitted, "but you ought to see the two new evening dresses Mother has bought! When they came out from town yesterday, I thought something especial was up. I almost swiped the black to wear last night myself; and oh, boy, if the moths had to live off that one, they'd starve to death! It's up to the knees in front and drags behind like a swallow's tail."

"The Mater is quite some doll when she steps out," C. F. admitted. "And she sure knows how to swing a mean party when she wants! To think of her having Al Jolson down to sing at the big show Sunday! Wow!"

"Yes, just think of it, with my Dickey needing a job!" I said bitterly. Then I burst into action. "C. F.," said I, "has it ever struck you that the way our parents pick on us for acting natural and enjoying ourselves, is a crime in view of the fact that they themselves do practically all the things they object to in us? Either their behavior is all right because it's a part and parcel of the present age," I went on, "or else their criticisms are sound, and the way we live is all wrong! And let me tell you another thing, Freddikins! Pa and Ma enjoy their whoopee, while you and I don't. We are ready for a change, isn't it so?"

My brother looked at me as if suddenly startled by my intelligence.

"If you mean am I sick and tired of a good time," said he, "I'm with you! I'm fed up with playing around, because that's all I've ever had to do! I'm dying to go to work, and you know it!"

"And so am I!" I agreed with him most heartily. "At least I'm dying, literally being slain, by the need to marry my Dickey and go to work for him. But Dickey can't marry me without money—a little money, anyway! Dad can and will freeze you out of that garage idea and into a law-office. If we don't both do something radical and do it quick, we are going to be stuck where we are until it's too late. And I believe we have a wonderful chance to get what we want right now. The Margers are our opportunity!"

"But how?" said he, unusually dumb for once. "What have the Margers got to do with it?"

"Well," said I slowly, "what sort of a week-end would the Margers have in this house if you and I were the kind of young people that Pa and Ma used to be, eh? If, let us say, we were to act and dress and generally behave in the good old way that was expected of young folks when Mother was a girl? Would Ma and Pa like it, or would they try and stop us? C. F., now is our chance—we must take steps!"

There was a little silence then, Rosamond dearest, before intelligence finally reached C. F. Then he came over and grabbed me by both hands.

"Baby, you're a genius!" he shouted.

WELL, Rosamond darling, the world may owe you a living, but it's up to you to collect it. There wasn't much time left, because the Margers were due on Saturday; but when Mrs. Marger walked into our drawing-room around five o'clock on Saturday, I knew that I'd done a good job. I could tell it from her face.

You see, darling, Mother was still upstairs. I'd seen to it that her maid was a little late getting out her things, and so I received Mrs. Marger alone. I'd dug up an old costume which I'd worn in a Junior League show, darling—you remember it, that gray wool sort of Priscilla affair with the high neck and long sleeves? Well, if it wasn't modest, a hen can swim! I'd sewn dear little ruffles into the wrists and neck, and I was discovered embroidering a lovely center-piece when Mrs. Marger made her entrance; a terrible-looking thing it was,—I mean the center-piece,—all over nasturtiums in natural colors and stretched over a pair of those wooden hoops. I'd found this prop in the village store where they'd had it in stock since 1898. When Mrs. Marger, a very smart, well-dressed lady in a model from the misses' department of a good store, came twinkling into our drawing-room on a thin pair of sheer hose ending in blue morocco sandals, I gave a little squeak of terror, and hid my embroidery in the nice white towel in my lap. Then I got to my feet.

"Oh, you must be Mrs. Marger!" I cried, all of a flutter. "You gave me such a start! You see, I thought it was Mamma, and I'm working on her Christmas gift and didn't want her to see. I'm so sorry if I was rude. How do you do? Do sit down here—let me get you a footstool. Mother will be down directly. Did you have a nice journey, or are you terribly tired?"

Mrs. Marger perched uneasily on the edge of the armchair I had shoved forward for her, and looked at me with a startled expression in her big, heavily made-up eyes. And well she might stare, darling, because I didn't have on a scrap of make-up, and my hair was drawn back very simply. I believe my nose was a little shiny—at least I'd creamed it slightly in order to make it so, and hadn't added any powder. In short, I was looking as much like the girl Mother had often described herself as having been, as I could.

"Well—er—dear me!" said Mrs. Marger at length. "Is it possible that you are Nellie Highlands' daughter?"

"Yes indeed!" I replied brightly. "And dear Mrs. Marger—or shall I call you Aunt Helen?—would you like to go straight to your room and lie down for a nice rest, or will you wait for dear Mamma?"

"I—er, I'll wait!" said she, glancing toward the door as if wondering whether or not it was still possible to escape. Then she looked at me again, this time at my high buttoned shoes. Believe me, darling, those shoes had taken some finding!

"Is there anything I can get you?" I then suggested. "Some smelling-salts? Or perhaps you would like something to drink?"

Rosamond, I could see that the woman was dying for one. She'd had a long drive down; she was tired; and it was the sacred hour of the shaker; and the way she sat up and took notice was rather pitiful.

"Why, I might—" she began. I broke in eagerly.

"A nice hot cup of milk?" I suggested sweetly. "Or perhaps of tea? I made a lovely cake this morning, and perhaps you'd enjoy it."

It was cruelty to animals, dear, and she wanted that tea about as much as you need a third leg; but looking at me, she simply did not have the nerve to ask for anything else. I rang for tea. Watkins, who answered the

bell, nearly dropped dead when I gave the order, but he's a well-trained servant, so all he did was open his mouth for an instant like a fish, before leaving the room.

"So you are embroidering!" said Mrs. Marger after an uncomfortable little pause. "One doesn't often see a girl employed that way nowadays!"

"Oh, don't you do any fancy-work?" I asked innocently. "I love to keep my hands busy!"

"So Satan will be out of a job, I suppose!" she retorted dryly. "No, I haven't done anything like that in years. Do you dance?"

"Oh, yes," I replied. "Though not after midnight on Saturdays!" I did not add, darling, that the reason for this was because by that time I was generally doing a little light necking in somebody's car! Mrs. Marger didn't seem to know what to say, after that, and squirmed a bit in her seat, trying to keep under cover a book she had brought with her. But in the silence that followed, it dropped to the floor; and ducky, it was that one everybody was whispering about—you know, "Naughty Women," by Jacob Loftkin. Of course I sprang to pick it up for her; and Rosamond, Mrs. Marger blushed when I handed it back!

"So sorry!" she muttered as I gave her the volume. "Very awkward!"

"Not at all," I replied sweetly. "Is it a nice book, like Tennyson's 'Idyls of the King'?"

"Not exactly!" she replied, hastily changing the subject. "Tell me, what do you do to amuse yourself out here in the country?"

"Oh, we have a croquet set," I replied brightly. "And tennis. But there are not many really nicely brought-up young people around!"

There was another little pause, at the end of which Mrs. Marger leaned forward anxiously, with a question.

"Tell me, my dear!" she implored. "I—well, you know I haven't seen your mother in—dear me, it must be twenty years! I take it she is very conservative?"

"If you mean that Mother does not approve of the modern younger generation, you are correct, Mrs. Marger," I replied. "She has very strict ideas about young people and how they should behave!"

YOU see, darling, Mother had come into the room just as our guest asked her question, so it was my chance to put a fast one over. Mother heard me, all right, and it was only after she and Mrs. Marger had got through kissing each other and lying about how little the other had changed, and how wonderful the looked, that Mother really saw me. Well, Rosamond, it must have been a blow. For my maternal parent was all decked out in a half-portion little sweater suit that made her look about fourteen from the rear and not much over thirty, front view. She really is good at it, you know! But my own clothes made a contrast that was just a little awkward. However, nothing deadly happened immediately, because Mother is far too well bred to make a scene at such a moment; and just then in came Watkins with the tea-tray.

"So sorry, Helen darling, that I was late!" Mother chattered, looking at me out of the corner of her eye. "I hope that Natacha has been taking care of you?"

"She's been remarkably interesting!" said the guest, giving me the icy eye. "It's the first time I've met a real young girl in ages."

"Well, I'm sure you must be dying—" Mother began.

"For some tea!" I said firmly, seating myself behind the tray. "Cream or lemon, Mrs. Marger?"

Mother looked the tray over for the shaker, but of course it wasn't there. So she said nothing. How could she, Rosamond? You see, she hadn't laid eyes on her girlhood friend for a long time, and so how could she know what Mrs. Marger really wanted? I knew,

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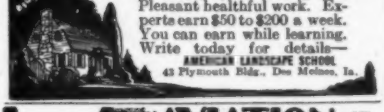

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but it wasn't my place to tell. And so the two old girls had to take their tea and like it! I even succeeded in forcing cake on 'em too, Rosamond, by claiming to have made it especially for the occasion. What was to follow, I could only guess. But when I finally gathered up my face-towel-full of embroidery and left them, because I was "sure they wanted to talk about old times," and had practically curtsied myself out of the room, I at least had the satisfaction of hearing Mrs. Marger say something which put the jinx on Mother's rowing me too badly.

"Such a sweet, old-fashioned daughter!" she said to Mother as I left. "Personally, I would think it must be a rather difficult business, living up to the child's ideals!"

Wow! Wasn't that a hot one, darling? It was a regular pair of handcuffs for Ma, eh, what? And maybe I didn't realize it, either! Outside in the hall, I ran into C. F., who had just brought Dad and Mr. Marger back from the golf club. The two older men were looking black as thunderclouds, especially Dad. Mr. Marger wore the look of a Houdini who didn't, for once, know how to get out of it. He allowed himself to be dragged into the drawing-room to be reintroduced to my mother, while C. F. and I locked arms and fled upstairs to my own sitting-room. Once inside, we closed the door and fell onto opposite ends of the big sofa.

"Suffering catfish, what an afternoon!" he ejaculated. "I must have a little shot! I've earned it!"

"Not a chance!" I said severely. "We have got to play this thing square! We are now the pure product of the gay nineties, and it's our gag to stay that way to the end. How did you come out?"

"Through a knothole, from the way I feel," said C. F. "But I guess you're right. While we are pulling our game, it's better not to let the folks get anything on us. It's a darn' shame that it's got to be done, though, because old Marger is a regular guy, and I believe we'd be pals if we had a chance. But you ought to have seen his face when I showed up!"

And as I looked C. F. over, I could just about imagine that for myself—for the small brother had also dressed the part. He'd dug up a plain dark suit, and a William Tell bow tie—you know, Rosamond, the kind on an elastic that when you pull the bow, it flies back and hits the apple! To top this off, he had a bowler hat that somehow gave him a sad, sanctified appearance, and he'd been carrying a studious-looking portfolio stuffed full of papers—comics, I discovered upon looking into the matter carefully. But his mere appearance was enough to depress any modern parent going.

WELL, Rosamond, it seems that C. F. had begun his dirty work by letting the chauffeur go for the week-end. He was surprised but happy, and made one fling for freedom. Of course that left the old man flat, because he hates to drive himself, and it meant he'd have the pleasure of C. F.'s company a lot between then and Monday morning. He told Cedric Frederick to come over to the golf club and pick him up around five, because he and Marger were going there straight from the office to tuck in a few rounds. So C. F. went. In those clothes! Well, the old boys were in the locker-room when he breezed in, and were just finishing their wash-ups, so Dad introduced C. F. and then told him to page a few drinks.

"Just see what the steward's got, that's a boy!" said he. "A few nice cold baccardis will do!"

"Why, Dad!" said C. F., horrified. "I couldn't do that, really! Please don't ask me to!"

The old man stopped in the middle of tying his shoe and turned around to stare at him. I think, Rosamond, that was the first moment he really lamped the small brother's disguise.

"What?" he roared. "You gone crazy?"

"No, Father!" C. F. said. "But I'm sure you don't want to make such a request in this club, of which you are president! It's such a bad example for the young people!"

Well, Freddikins told me that Mr. Marger turned around then and had a good stare too. His tongue was probably hanging out, but he didn't dare make a crack.

"Perhaps the young man is right!" said he. "Don't do anything likely to prove embarrassing on my account, Highlands!"

Well, Rosamond, C. F. went on to tell me that Dad had been absolutely dumfounded. He didn't know what to say, but he was mad as a hatter! However, it seems he gave in; and then, while C. F. stood there pretending to watch with horror, Dad pulled out a flask, and he and Mr. Marger had their snorter. And this was a big laugh, Rosamond, because it was the first time either C. F. or I knew that Dad owned a hip-enlarger.

Well, darling, it appears that after this agony was over, C. F. drove the old boys home. As a rule he drives so fast you can't read one word of the scenery, but today he drove so slowly and carefully that Dad went nearly wild, but after the way he'd bawled the kid out so often for speeding, he didn't dare say a word. Freddy went so slow that his old enemy the traffic-cop on that stretch turned around on his motorcycle to go have a look at what C. F. must have hit. I guess he couldn't account for the good behavior in any other way!

NOW, Rosamond darling, you know that the big difference between a saint and a sinner is that one had a past and the other has a future; and so I felt rather sinful when I dressed for dinner that night. I'd managed to keep out of Mother's sight up to the moment of completing my dressing, but I knew she'd nail me before it was time to go down, and she did. She came out of her room just as I opened my door, and as our rooms are nearly opposite, there we stood like a cat and a mouse who have met so unexpectedly that they even forget to bow. We made a sharp contrast, if anyone had been there to see it, and it didn't take long to realize that Mother wasn't exactly pleased with the effect. Because, ducky, I had put on a *rôbe-du-style* which covered my legs the way Niagara covers the rocks—long white billows of taffeta right down to my ankles, all around, and a stiff, funny little bodice, the *décolletage* of which I had filled in with a bit of lace so that my wishbone wouldn't show too much. It was a new frock, to be sure, but one which had been shelved as a flop, but luckily I hadn't given it away as yet, for it was the only thoroughly modest evening rig I possessed.

Mamma, on the other hand, had put on that black chiffon wisp of a swallow-tail dress, which made her look like a weeping willow in the back, and a stocking-advertisement from the front. It was terribly smart and becoming, what there was of it, and in a roomful of costumes of the same kind, it would have passed the mustard. But stacked up against my badly cut, long-skirted whiteness, it sure gave Ma the appearance of an abandoned woman.

"Natacha Highlands!" she exclaimed. "What on earth made you put on that awful dress tonight, of all times? What has possessed you the last few hours, anyway? Have you gone quite crazy?"

"Why, no, dear!" I said gently. "I just couldn't find another frock. Everything else I own seems to have something the matter with it, and I didn't want to be late."

"But my dear child!" said Mamma. "If you wear that animated bedspread, I simply cannot go down in this gown! You make me look positively immodest."

"Oh, your dress is no worse than my transparent green!" I said sweetly. "Of course it does look rather short, and the back—well, it just proves what a nice back you have!"

Mother clutched at her shoulder-straps.

"Natacha—I—well, that gown of yours!" she sputtered, bewildered. "I really think you might have seen to it that you had something fit to wear!"

"But this is fit, Mother!" I protested. "At least it's decent. Nobody could say I look like a show-girl in it."

"I should say not!" she snapped. Then she realized that I had no make-up on, and started to speak of it—remembered, I suppose, how often she's crabbed about my using make-up, and turning abruptly, slammed back into her room. And when she came down, ten minutes later, Rosamond, she was wearing an old beaded dress—one that covered her! Rather a tacky affair, that made her look almost her age, and nobody could have called her appearance anything but dignified. And then she discovered that the minister and his wife had been added to the dinner-party.

YOU see, darling, we have the sweetest old minister, a perfect lamb, really, and he had telephoned earlier that day about a subscription to the new organ. Luckily I had got him on the wire myself, and in an inspired moment had suggested that he and Mrs. Thomas come and dine. They had accepted *pronto*, and naturally when Mamma found them in the drawing-room, she couldn't say anything, but she could look a lot—in my direction. Because, darling, you know Mother really has a great deal of respect for the Reverend Mr. Thomas, and wouldn't offend him for the world; but he doesn't exactly help toward making any genuine whoopee. To begin with, he has conservative ideas about Prohibition, so we could not serve any cocktails, and Mother had to call Watkins aside and cancel the wine, in a whisper; and Dad had to call Mr. Marger aside and whisper to him, after which they left the room for a few minutes and came back with the look of a couple of canaries who have just defeated the cat—you know, sort of cock-eyed and chirping!

Well, darling, it was what might be called a perfect home evening; one of those nice, old-fashioned good times such as you hear tell about, and see on the pretty Christmas-cards, but seldom run into in real life. The conversation was full of sweet, wholesome talk about foreign missions, the weather, and gardening, which Mrs. Thomas was very hot at. I succeeded in putting Verdi's "Requiem" on the phonograph, and Mr. Thomas made us hush and listen to it. All the while it was playing, I could fairly hear Dad's new little roulette-outfit scratching at the doors of the cupboard, trying to get out. But it had to stay in there and smother. The Reverend Mr. Thomas didn't encourage gambling either; and so, when after dinner, bridge was suggested and the Margers brightened visibly, we had to dim their lights again by announcing that we were going to play "for fun." And when the fun proved to be rather old hat, well, we gave it up after a few rubbers, and then I sprang the glad surprise of the evening by producing a big volume bound in yellow plush.

"Where," said Mamma, glaring at the antique, "where did you get that thing?"

"Why, Mother darling," I said, "don't you know, it's the family album! I thought that dear Aunt Helen would like to look at the pictures. It's got Grandpa and Grandma in it, you know, and I thought seeing it would remind her of old times!"

"What a sweet sentiment!" said Mr. Thomas. "I would like to see those pictures myself. And I must say, Mrs. Highlands, I congratulate you on your daughter. One seldom finds such a girl among the young people of today!"

Great old team-work, wasn't it, Rosamond? If we'd rehearsed, we couldn't have done any better! When C. F. heard that last one, he got up and left the room abruptly. I thought at the time he'd gone outside to laugh, but I

found out later that I was mistaken. You see, dear, he had abandoned his wide trousers, and in order to look objectionably virtuous was wearing the very first evening suit he'd ever owned, which was made when he was fifteen, and it was now rather short in the sleeves and very tight in the pants. And the pants couldn't stand the strain any longer.

Of course, Rosamond darling, an evening like that, mercifully, cannot go on forever. And it didn't. Just as I was wondering if I could play "The Maiden's Prayer" on the piano, the minister and his wife went home. And I am sure that the Margers would have followed them if it hadn't been so late. As it was, they must have excused themselves and gone up to bed immediately, because I had scarcely got into my own bed and composed myself before I heard Dad and the Mater outside my door in the hallway.

"It's an outrage, and it's got to end!" my father thundered. "What are those children trying to do—make utter fools out of themselves?"

"Are they, though?" replied Mamma, who is by no means dumb. "I'm not certain, Henry, who the fools really are! After all, we've preached at them about a lot of things that we don't practice, and perhaps they have really had a change of heart!"

"Change of devilment!" roared Dad. "I'll bet you that new diamond bracelet you wanted, that both your young scoundrels are out of the house this very minute, probably off in C. F.'s roadster, dancing at some night-club! And if they are, they wont get into my house again, I'll tell you that!"

"Henry, be reasonable!" pleaded Mother. "You can't get angry with the children for doing exactly what you've been trying to make them do ever since they grew up!" There was a hint of laughter in her voice. But none in Dad's.

"If they are sincere in this ridiculous about-face," he growled, "then we have a dull life ahead of us! But it's a bluff, I tell you, an outrageous piece of impudence! I'm going into Natacha's room and prove what I say—she's out, I tell you! We wont even find her there!" And with that he opened my door.

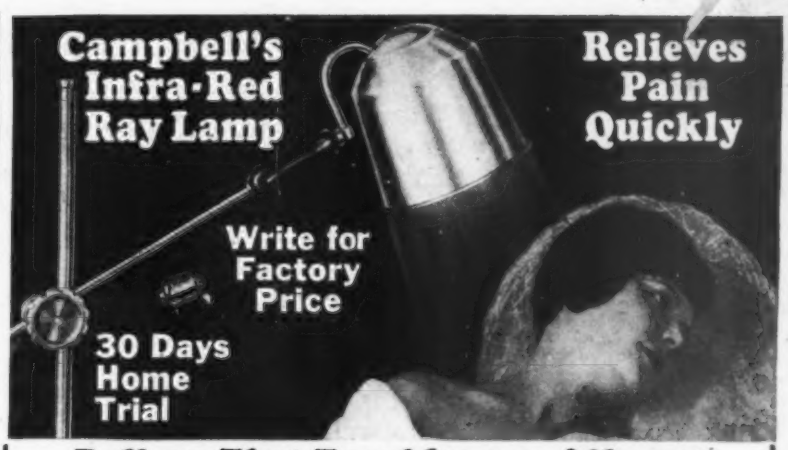
REALLY, Rosamond, I'm not vain, even though I admit I seldom give myself up to reflection unless there is a mirror in the room; but just the same I'm certain that my parents found a very touching and beautiful picture when they opened my door that night. For there was I, sound asleep on my back, the bed lamp still lighted, and my open prayer-book lying on my breast, just as it had fallen from my hands, the sweet smile of innocence on my lips. I heard Mother give a soft little gasp as she looked at me. Then she gently removed the prayer-book and whispered to Dad.

"There, dear!" she said tenderly. "You see, it's genuine! Oh, Henry, I'm afraid she's really reformed! Isn't it perfectly appalling? What shall we do?"

"Reformed? Why reformed?" whispered Dad. "What on earth wanted reforming? Aren't we just ordinary citizens, doing what everybody does?"

"Are we?" said Mother. "I don't know! Come away, dear, and don't disturb the baby!"

Well, they tiptoed out of the room after that, snapping off the light for me before they left, and I don't mind telling you, Rosamond, I felt a little bit ashamed of myself. And worried, too! Because suppose my parents were really to become affected by the change in me and C. F., and do a little reforming on their own account? My heavens! It was all very well for me to pull my gag for a day or two, but it was about as natural to me as a frog wearing feathers! I simply could not go back and live permanently in the gay nineties, because I hadn't been born then; and my own generation, with all its outward faults, was where I belonged.



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But supposing that I had inadvertently started something I couldn't stop? What if my reform proved catching, and Dad and Mother quit all the amusing things they crabbed about when I wanted to play too?

NEXT morning when Mamma suggested sweetly that I take Mrs. Marger to church, I felt a cold shiver go down my spine. As a rule church was something we patronized on Christmas, holidays and weddings, but this was the first time I had ever heard it mentioned as a matter of course. However, I consented cheerfully, and though "Aunt Helen" looked like a martyr she didn't know how to refuse with any grace. Then Mr. Marger, looking rather self-conscious, suggested to Dad that they might play a round of golf before luncheon. But Cedric Frederick was in the breach before Dad could answer.

"What? On Sunday!" piped up my brother in a horrified voice. "Oh, not on Sunday, Mr. Marger! Father, you never played golf on Sunday when you were young, did you?"

Mr. Marger turned red and answered for Dad in no uncertain terms.

"Your father thought golf-pants were only fit for boys under fourteen; that's how much he knew about golf when he was young," he sputtered.

"I thought so!" replied C. F. gently. "Would you like my copy of the *Christian Friend* to read, if you're not going to church, Mr. Marger? Here it is, if you care for it!"

"What?" said our guest, helplessly taking the inoffensive sheet as if it had been red-hot. "Er—thank you!"

Dad had started from his chair at the sight of this, and goodness only knows what would have happened except for the fact that Watkins, passing the toast, whispered something in Dad's ear. I caught the words "bootlegger" and "hasn't shown up, sir," and the effect on Dad was magical. As you may remember, Rosamond darling, we were holding high whoopee that night, on a large scale. And so pretty soon Dad excused himself and went off to find out what was wrong. A nice Sunday morning occupation, eh, dear? C. F. was to drive Mrs. Marger and myself to church, but just before we were ready to start, a telegram was handed to me, and when I opened it, I at once had to get Mother into a conference, which I took good care should be a public one.

"Mr. Al Jolson can't come," I announced. "There, Mother! It's probably because he objects to performing on Sunday night!"

MOTHER looked at the wire, and then at the rest of us, evidently perplexed and upset. I could see that she was no longer as enthusiastic about her big party as she had been when she planned it, and this was sort of the last straw.

"But what am I to do?" she said frantically. "I've told everybody that Jolson is coming, and he's the leading attraction for tonight! I'll feel like a perfect idiot, having to apologize for him!"

"Well, dear, why not call off the whole affair?" I suggested. "You know it's not very nice, having this on Sunday night, anyhow. I never did approve of it."

"My dear child!" said Mother, exasperated. "I really must be allowed to decide a question like that, for myself. Besides, while you may be right about Sunday being a day in questionable taste for such an entertainment, it's too late to change the arrangements now. I can't have the entertainment ruined, either!"

"Well, dear, there's only one thing to do, then," said I. "I'll give up going to church and try to find a substitute for Mr. Jolson. I'll telephone to the agent, or get hold of him somehow, and you go along to church with Aunty Helen. But please make dear Mr. Thomas understand why I am absent!"

It was impossible to lay me out flat for that last in front of Mrs. Marger, but Mother looked a little as if she would like to bite my head off. However, she was so relieved at my suggestion of a substitute, that she went along in the car without further comment.

I think I told you, Rosamond dear, that Mr. Marger was known as the Houdini of the business world. And so he began to plan how to loosen up the old handcuffs. The Margers thought they were alone in the sun-parlor overlooking the bay, and so they were, but it just so happened that Mother and I had wandered into the big living-room behind, which is sort of shut off from the sun-parlor by a flock of chintz curtains.

The Margers did not hear us come in, and went right ahead planning to send themselves a telegram telling themselves to come back to town immediately! I tell you, Rosamond, that threw a big scare into me, because of course, darling, I hadn't meant things to go so far. Naturally I wouldn't for the world do anything to jeopardize Dad's deal with his old friend, and I never realized that in trying to blackmail the parents into allowing us to be human, we would punish our guests to such an extent.

"No!" said Mrs. Marger. "I can't stand it another minute. I'm bored to tears. Why should I be forced to spend a perfectly good week-end back in the dark ages? I graduated from this kind of living a couple of centuries ago. You get the wire written out and pretend to have received it, because it's obviously too late to phone the office and have them send you one."

"O. K. with me!" said Mr. Marger. "For old times' sake, I don't want to hurt the feelings of these folks; but if we don't make a get-away pretty soon, I'll go absolutely goofy. I'll be nuts if I stay around those awful youngsters another second!"

It was then that Mother came to life, Rosamond, and marched through the portières like an angry breeze. When they saw her, the Margers looked exactly as if they had been kids caught in a jam closet, and Mrs. Marger hid a lighted cigarette behind her back.

"There is no need to send yourselves any telegrams!" said Mother, perfectly furious. "You can go without that, if you want to go! I'm sorry you're so bored with my children. But if there were a few more like mine, it would be a good thing for the country, let me tell you! Not that you know anything about children, Helen Marger, never having had any yourself!"

"Why, Nellie!" exclaimed Mrs. Marger, helplessly. "Why, Nellie Highlands!"

"I think it's a shame for you to treat me like this!" Mother went on. "Here I've been looking forward to seeing you for weeks and weeks, and now the whole visit is a failure! You haven't acted natural from the moment you arrived, and it hasn't been a bit like old times!"

"I should say it hasn't!" retorted Mrs. Marger, not a bit disagreeably, however. "No, Nellie, it certainly hasn't been like old times! And as things have come to a good healthy show-down, I might as well be perfectly frank. I'm not going to quarrel with you over this stupid situation, but I'm going to speak my mind!"

SHE paused for breath, and Mother only gaped at her without a word. Mr. Marger murmured something about, "Now, now, Helen," but he might as well have tried to stop Niagara with a teacup.

"Well, Nellie," his wife went on, "of course I haven't seen you for twenty years, and people do change in that time, but I must say that when I accepted this invitation I certainly thought I could count on having an amusing week-end in your house, especially when I remembered you and Henry in the old days back in Rockville, and the way you used to carry on! You, a girl that used to sit up almost all night in a hammock, spooning, and went buggy-riding at all hours, and the way you used to like kissing-games! Not to mention the time we all drank too much hard cider at your barn-dance, or the way you taught me to smoke cigarettes, up in the hayloft! Why, you used to be more fun than any girl in town, and we had a fairly swift crowd, at that! And as for Henry! Why, don't you remember when Henry nearly got disowned for smoking in public? How about the time you and Henry were nearly locked out of your houses because you came back so late, and your mother kept you in your room, afterward, because she thought Henry was no good? Why, Nellie Highlands, have you forgotten all about the time when—"

"Helen!" shouted Mamma. "I suppose you never did any of those things yourself? I suppose you think I've forgotten about the time on that straw-ride when you—"

"I have not forgotten any such thing!" Mrs. Marger denied promptly. "I remember it all, and am glad of it. That's what keeps me human! And it's one reason why I'm so disgusted to come out here and find that you and Henry have brought up your children to be a couple of silly prigs! Why don't you remember your own youth, and let them act natural? I can't stand watching you ruin all their chances for any fun, and that's why I'm going home!"

Statement of the Ownership, Management, Circulation, Etc., Required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE, published monthly at Chicago, Ill., for October 1st, 1929.

State of New York, } ss.
County of New York }

Before me, a Notary, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared John D. Hartman, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Assistant Treasurer of The McCall Co., publisher of The Red Book Magazine and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:
Publisher, The McCall Company.....230 Park Avenue, New York City.
Editor, Edwin Balmer.....230 Park Avenue, New York City.
Managing Editor, E. M. Millen.....230 Park Avenue, New York City.
Business Managers, None.

2. That the owner is:
The New Publishing Company....Wilmington, Delaware.
McCall Corporation (Owner of The New Publishing Company stock).....Wilmington, Delaware.
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JOHN D. HARTMAN, Assistant Treasurer.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of September, 1929.

WALTER J. BOYLE, Notary Public.
New York County No. 154.
New York County Reg. No. 0-154.
Kings County No. 150.
Kings County Reg. No. 239.
My commission expires March 30, 1930.

JUST then a new voice boomed into the conversation. It was Dad's voice, Rosamond, and he came in like a lion.

"My boy a prig?" he protested. "I should say not, Helen old girl! Why, you're crazy to say such a thing! The kid's the best mechanic I know, and he's going to ditch the law in favor of the garage business, aint you, son? He's been after me for months to buy him an interest in a little place here in town, where he will get a chance to do some of the work with his own hands! A prig? Why, you don't know the boy!"

"Look here, Dad!" said C. F., coming to life as if he had been shot. "Do you mean that? You've said it in front of witnesses, you know!"

"I hope you do mean it, Highlands," said Mr. Marger. "Because I don't mind telling you, it's what your boy needs! It will take some of this wishy-washy sanctimonious nonsense out of his head and make a man of him!"

"Well, I'd a damned sight rather have him a mechanic than a censor!" said Dad gruffly. "And now that we've had our little explosion, can't we call it a day? Let's be human, for the love of Mike. We've been friends too long for any damned-fool quarrels!"

"Well, I'll forget it, if Nellie will," put in Mrs. Marger. "But for goodness sake, let's take down our back hair and tell our right names! And Nellie has got to promise me she'll let poor little Natacha have at least as much fun as she had herself, when she was a girl!"

"Aunt Helen, you're a knockout!" I exclaimed.

"Don't call me 'Aunt,'" said she. "It makes me feel like Methuselah's first wife! Call me Helen. It's a good beginning, and perhaps it will help you to learn to be as young as I am. You've got to hurry to catch up with the times, Natacha, child! Just remember you can't get anywhere by watching the express train go by your station!"

WELL, Rosamond, that's what made C. F. and me such good friends with the parents. Sure, that's all. What more do you want? Oh, yes, of course, dear, Mother did eventually tell me where I got off, and I admit it was a good thing, too, because after all, one must respect even the most modern parents. It happened that evening when we were all upstairs, dressing for dinner. I'd got out of my tub and was looking the old wardrobe over, when in came Mamma in her dressing-gown, and told me to wear the transparent green dress!

"All right, dear," said I. "I'll do that, but only if you wear your swallow-tailed black."

"It's laid out!" she replied. "And, Natacha, for heaven's sake, act human tonight!"

"But of course, darling!" I said. "I give you my word I wont do anything you didn't do when you were a girl! And by the way, Mother, do you know who you're paying a thousand dollars to tonight to substitute for Mr. Jolson?"

"No!" said she, alarmed. And how right she was!

"My Dickey!" said I slowly. "And you know, Mother, that you said if he ever got as much as a thousand for any single performance, we could get married."

"Oh, but I wont have it!" she sputtered. "I wont have that young man in my house!"

"It's too late now," I said. "He's in C. F.'s room this minute. Besides, you gave your word, you know, and if you don't keep it, I'll go pure again and wear my *robe-du-style!*"

"All right, wear it!" said Mother, using the remark as an exit line. "Do whatever you wish, and if you want your fiancé to see you looking the way you did last night, go to it!"

And she went out, closing the door, while I—well, naturally, Rosamond, I made one nose-dive into the transparent green!

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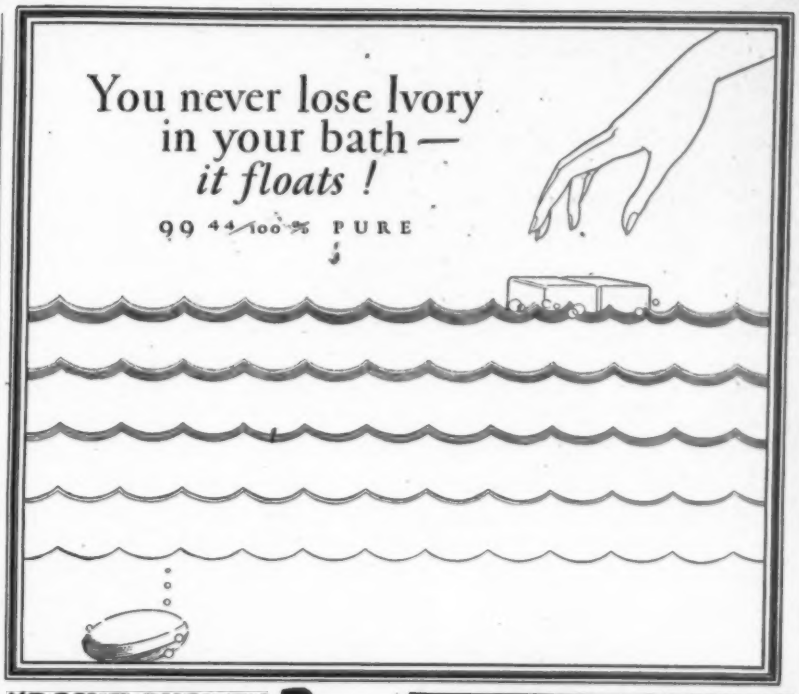

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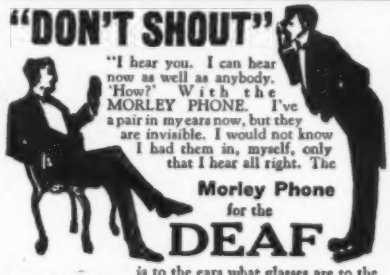

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When Age Chuckles

"YOU are the youngest looking grandfather I ever saw. What's the secret?" "My dear, two things. The good health that I have worked for and won—and a keen interest in life. With books, music, sports, travel, inventions—each day brings something new. I want to see what will follow the telephone, radio, automobile, aircraft—what electricity will do next. . . ."

No longer do scientists accept the idea of a fixed "span of life". They know that the average length of life is longer in some countries than in others. They know that babies fare more safely in the world—that people everywhere face fewer dangers today from contagious and other diseases.

While the average length of life has increased by 10 years since 1901, the improvement has been achieved mainly among the younger ages, leaving as our most pressing problem the protection of the lives of those who have passed middle age.

One by one the perils which formerly caused untimely deaths are being conquered. "Witches" are not burned nowadays to stop plagues. On the other hand, sanitation, vaccination, inoculation and other scientific means are employed to prevent most of them.

People are learning the effect of fresh air, sunshine, cleanliness, proper breathing and exercise, sleep and a well-balanced diet. An annual medical examination for the discovery and correction of physical impairments before they have progressed too far to be remedied will help keep the body sound.

In the United States and Canada there are more than 2,500,000 people between 70 and 80 years of age; more than 600,000 between 80 and 90; fifty-odd thousand between 90 and 100; and about 5,000 past the century mark.

The person who plans wisely to live to a happy and ripe old age never forgets that the mind is a powerful influence and that physical troubles are apt to follow a morbid viewpoint.

The world is tingling today with promise of future marvels even more wonderful than those we now know. Live to enjoy them.

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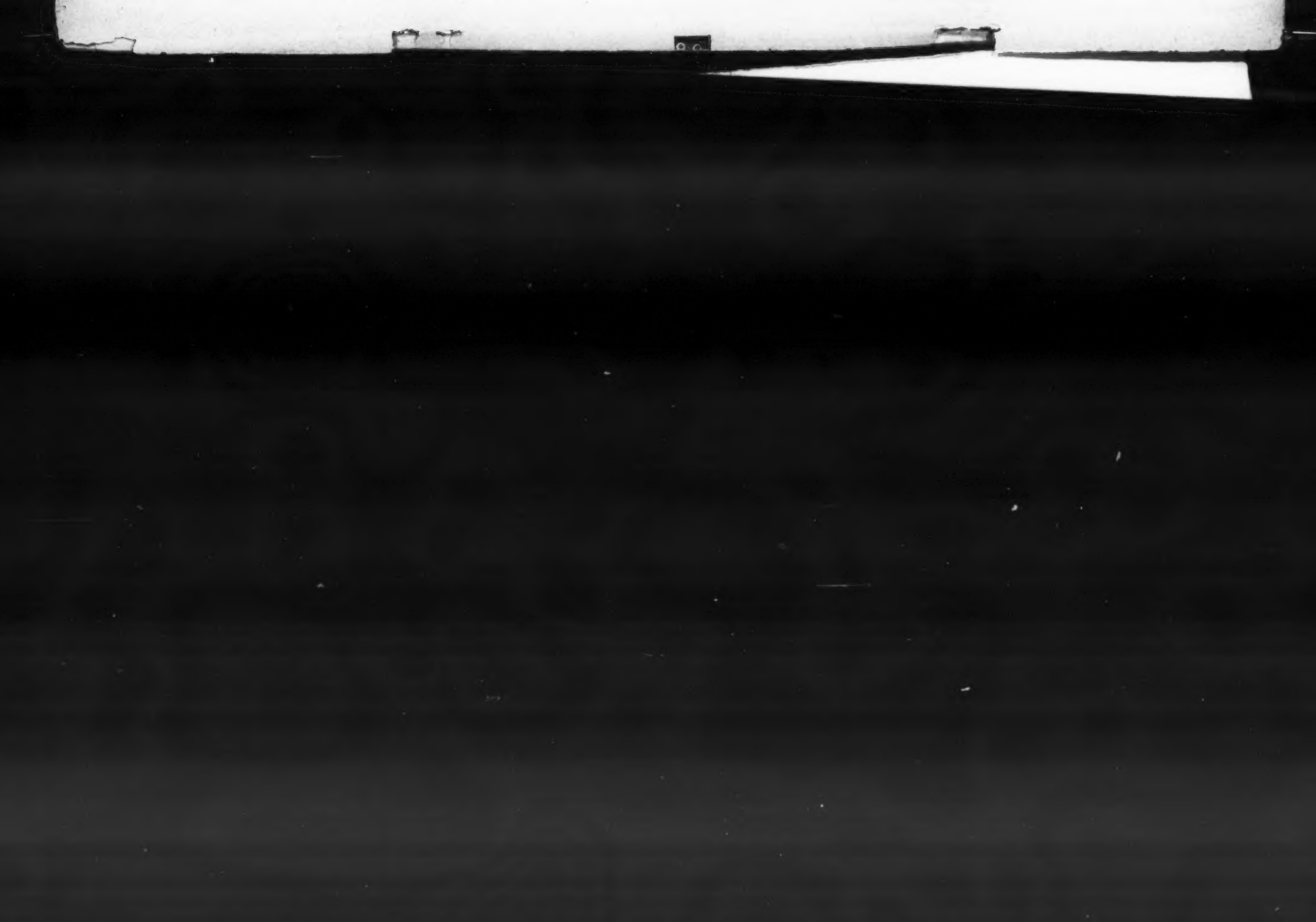
You will find that the Metropolitan booklet, "Health, Happiness and Long Life", will help. Ask for Booklet 129-R. Mailed free.

METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

FREDERICK H. ECKER, PRESIDENT — ONE MADISON AVE., NEW YORK, N. Y.



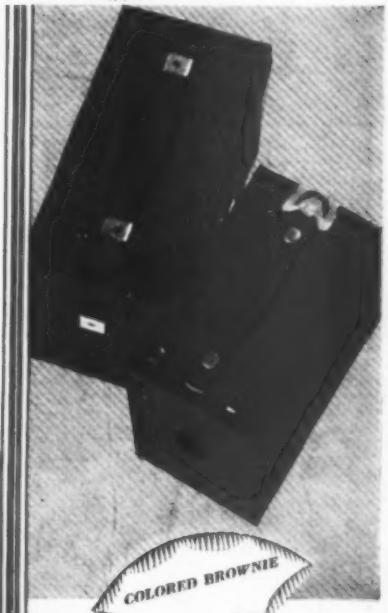
Give a Kodak

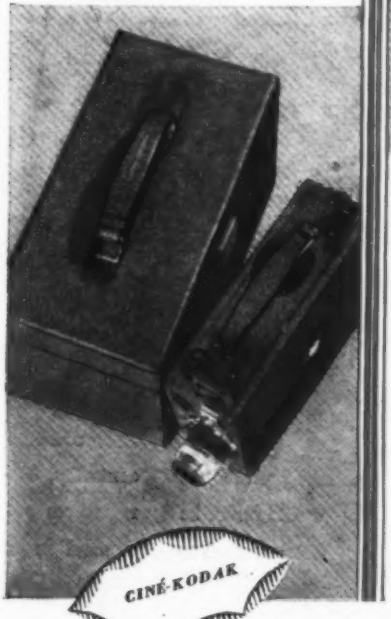
Eastman presents five unusual Christmas opportunities... five splendid cameras created during the last few months... all offered in a variety of colors... all designed in the modern mode.

Kodak Ensembles: Covered with fabric suede; with moire lining. Contains Kodak, mirror, change pocket, lipstick, rouge and powder compact. Choice of colors: rose, beige, green. Picture size: 1⅝ x 2½. Price: $15.00.

Kodaks Petite: Dainty Kodaks in five vivacious colors: blue, gray, rose, lavender, green. Picture size: 1¾ x 2¼. Price: $6.50; with case, $7.50.

Pocket Kodaks Junior: Colors: blue, brown, green and black. Picture sizes: No. 1, 2¼ x 3¼; No. 1A, 2½ x 4¼. Prices: No. 1—$11.00 with case, $9.00 without; No. 1A—$12.50 with case, $10.00 without.





Model BB f.1.9 Ciné-Kodaks: Light, small, efficient. Case has compartments for Kodacolor attachments, two packages of film and lens for telephoto effects Colors: blue, gray, brown, black. Price, including case, $140.

Colored Brownies: Colors: red, green, gray, brown, blue. Models: 2 and 2A. Pictures: 2¼ x 3¼ and 2½ x 4¼ respectively. Prices: $3 and $4 without case, $5 and $6 with case.

For these Christmas opportunities, see your Kodak dealer. Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N. Y.